



Will Eisner's THE SPIRIT

No.31 \$2

Eisner
Interviews
Harvey
Kurtzman



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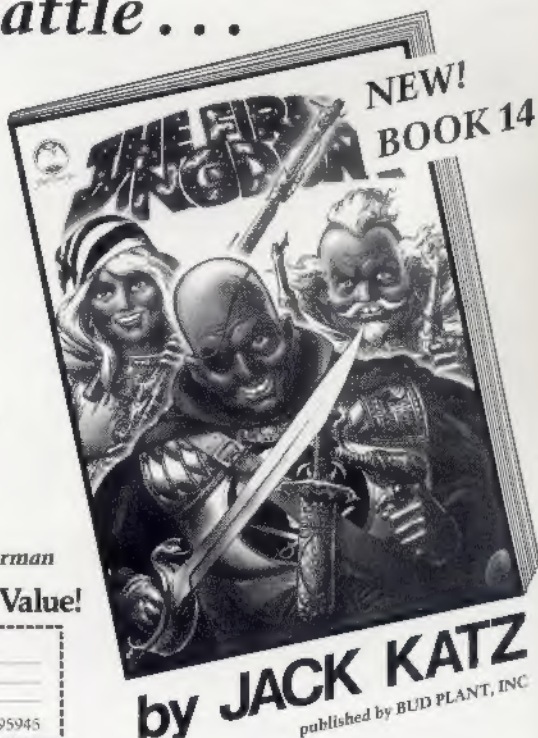
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by **JACK KATZ**
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THE DEPT. of LOOSE ENDS

Would you believe just ONE loose end this time?

"The Siberian Dagger" is the story in which the great sleuth **Niechevo** is introduced. It should have properly appeared prior to the reprinting of **Niechevo's** second appearance in "The Cosmic Answer," but that came out in **Kitchen's Spirit** No.21, one issue before the new sane, logical, rational approach to reprinting was instituted. So...if you wondered who the heck **Niechevo** and **Murmansk Manny** were back in issue No.21, you can now fill in the gaps. Going back and re-reading "The Cosmic Answer," after you're done with "The Siberian Dagger" might be a good idea too. In a way, the former has more loose ends than the latter, although there was no explanation offered for them at the time of reprinting, since that was before this column came into being. The continuity is important enough to deserve a little more commentary, even though it's been ten issues since "The Cosmic Answer" came out. Why? Well, because we are going to be more of certain minor aspects of that story in months to come.

One of the characters who appears in "The Cosmic Answer" is a dancer named **Bucken Wing**. He first showed up in the as-yet-unreprinted "Heart of Rosie Lee" on October 13, 1946. His next appearance came on December 15 of the same year in "The Van Gaul Diamonds." **Wing** was never a major character in *The Spirit* -- in fact, "The Cosmic Answer" (February 2, 1947) marked his last appearance in the strip. But what **Bucken Wing** represented -- the world of jazz and popular music -- came to have increased importance in the series as 1947 wore on.

In "The Cosmic Answer," **Murmansk Manny** sings a little snatch of what sounds like a Siberian ditty, "Avvy li'l bokk got booblichka to hogg but me." Two months earlier, in "The Van Gaul Diamonds" it was **Bucken Wing** who crooned the same lyrics in English. By April, 1947, **Ebony White** follows in **Wing's** footsteps, joins a jazz band and...aw, but that would be telling. Just remember for now, we're not done with the worms and germs and pachyderms. Not to mention the birds and bees.

The rest of this issue's reprints were essentially one-shots. "The Barber," which scribe **Jules Feiffer** "borrowed" from a **Ring Lardner** short story, appears by reader request. "Just One Word Made Me A Man" is, needless to say, a parody of the famous **Charles Atlas** ads which have graced comic book pages for so many years. And "Wanted," an **Eisner-Fine** collaboration, fills in a lengthy gap in **Denny Colt's** biography, coming directly after his first parting with his childhood sweetheart, **Sand Saref**, and his return to Central City, where he took up detective work. It is probable, given what is known about **Colt's** love for **Sand**, that he joined the Merchant Marine and sailed to South America in a vain attempt to find her after she sailed off on **Madame Spangles'** gambling ship. Perhaps someday **Will Eisner** will see fit to elucidate on this. For now we can but speculate.

---cat yronwode

Publisher's Postscript

There can be no doubt about it: a curse lingers around the "Outer Space" episodes of *The Spirit* drawn by **Wally Wood** as **Will Eisner's** creation was coming to the end of its run in the summer of 1952. First, deadline problems plagued the series, resulting in exasperating last-minute inking efforts by **Eisner** (who was at that time involved in other projects) and fill-in stories such as the refired "Amulet of Osiris." But the curse really struck for the first time when the "Close Encounters" episode was not completed in time and ultimately was run entirely out of sequence in the original run. (See Cat's "Dept. of Loose Ends" in *The Spirit* No.27 for details.)

Our own problems began in *The Spirit* No.21 when we inadvertently reprinted Chapter Three of the "Outer Space" series right after Chapter One in our reprint effort. Will and I offered a "jam" page "explaining" our error in *The Spirit* No.22 (see page 49 of that issue.) Then, to make matters even worse, in the very same issue in which we explained our error, pages 4 and 5 of the **Wood** story were transposed!

It would seem that the curse ended when we ran the last of the "Outer Space" episodes in *The Spirit* No.28. However, for the special "Jam" story in our last issue, No.30, artist **Michael T. Gilbert** dared to pay homage to the **Wood** serial as part of his three page contribution. Despite a sharp-eyed production crew of four for that issue, as well as an experienced printing crew, the curse prevailed. **Gilbert's** second page, with the **Wood** tribute, of course, was transposed with his third page, disrupting the jam continuity for discerning readers.

Ordinarily we would apologize for a human error at this point. But we are not dealing with a "human" problem here. After publishing fifteen issues of *The Spirit* magazine, the only significant errors have all involved the **Wood** story in some way. To help make matters right, we are running Mike's three pages in reduced form in the Letters section of this issue.

...in correct order. We hope.

---denis kitchen

THE SPIRIT

Editor-in-Chief

WILL EISNER

Editor & Publisher

DENIS KITCHEN

Associate Editor

CAT YRONWODE

Circulation

HOLLY BROOKS

Subscriptions

DOREEN RILEY

2... **Eisner Checklist**, part three.

5... **Wanted For Murder**. **Denny Colt** goes to Central America to confess to a murder committed before he became *The Spirit*.

15... **Siberian Dagger**. A cast of crazy Russians take over **Dolan's** livingroom as well as the story. See the Dept. of Loose Ends.

22... **Shop Talk**, part two. **Will Eisner** interviews one of our favorite comics geniuses, **Harvey Kurtzman**! France, techniques and the passing of pen nibs are discussed among other topics.

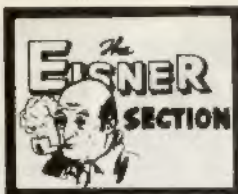
31... **Just One Word Made Me A Man**. **Ebony** flexes his muscles in this **Charles Atlas** parody.

38... **Stoops**. Eight pages of brand new art from **Will Eisner's** big city series.

46... **The Barber**. A poignant *Spirit* tale from 1950.

53... **Letters & Classified Ads**

Will Eisner's THE SPIRIT No.31. Published bi-monthly by **Kitchen Sink Comics**, a division of **Krupp Comic Works, Inc.**, Number 2 Swamp Road, Princeton, Wisconsin 54968. ISSN 0279-5523. Subscription rates: single issue \$2. Six issues (one year) \$12 in North America. \$14/year elsewhere via seamount or \$18/year via airmail. Second Class Postage paid at Princeton, Wisconsin. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Spirit*, No.2 Swamp Road, Princeton, Wisconsin 54968. Contents © copyright 1981 by **Will Eisner**. All rights reserved under Universal Copyright Convention. The name *The Spirit* is registered by the U.S. Patent Office, Marca Registrada, Marque Deposee. Nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher. This issue was printed in Oct. 1981. Printed in U.S.A. Wholesale inquiries are invited. Write to us above or call (414) 295-3972 or 295-6922.



THE EISNER CHECKLIST

**ACTION
Mystery
IRONWODE**

PART THREE

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE:

Baltimore Colts: regular comic book format, with a cover by Will. The interior pages consist of an introduction written by Eisner and drawn by Grandenetti, and grease pencil sports cartoon biographies of the Colts football team for 1950, signed "Haller." Who Haller is has not been determined — most likely, he was the regular sports cartoonist for the Baltimore Sun, which carried *The Spirit*. The booklet, which carries a 25 cent cover price, was sold in the stands and contains an editorial by Abe Watner, president of the Colts management, entitled "SPIRIT," in apparent reference to Eisner's part in the project. "With 'The Spirit' behind us," reads the last line of Watner's page, "we will have a winning team."

P*S, The Preventive Maintenance Monthly: This was the successor to *Army Motors*, initiated at the beginning of the Korean War. The format was more comic-oriented, though, with a regular eight page *Joe Dope* story instead of the two page one *Army Motors* carried. In addition to this, the cast of characters originated in the earlier magazine now began to have adventures together, in addition to hosting their own advice and how-to columns. Pvt. Ona Ball (a WAC) was not continued from *Army Motors*, but *Joe Dope*, Sgt. Half-Mast McCannick, Connie Rodd and Pvt. Fogsnof were joined by such new characters as Sgt. Bull Dozer, Windy Windsock and, by the time of the Vietnam conflict, Bonnie, a black version of Connie. The magazine began in early 1951, and until 1952, all of the art and much of the script was by Eisner. In 1952 the technical drawings increased in number, and they were drawn by shop assistants such as Dan Zolnerowich. Klaus Nordling also helped on the art. By 1954 there was as much non-Eisner art, although he continued to do the covers and the colour comic strip on his own. By the late 1960s the work of artists such as Murphy Anderson, Chuck Kramer and Mike Ploog can be seen, working from Eisner model sheets of the major characters or over his rough layouts. In 1972, Will dropped the P*S contract, although to this day the artists still use his character designs in drawing the comic strip. The earliest issues of P*S did not have a slick cover (although it was in colour, similar to the way a *Spirit* Section was done. Later issues had slick covers and newsprint interiors, which were replaced in time by white paper interiors. Ironically, the best Eisner art in the series appears on the least durable paper stock.

Joe Dope (Strip): In addition to his appearances in *Army Motors* and P*S, *Joe Dope* (and Connie) ran in a series of weekly one-tier strips during 1951. These strips, which had a certain casual form of continuity, were meant to be published by Army camp newspapers around the world, but only 20 week's worth were actually drawn. There was also a *Joe Dope* strip drawn in comic book format, the original artwork for which still exists, but if and where this was printed is not known. It may have just been a sample page, never intended to be published.

Deadly Ideas: A reading rack booklet with a tall upright format, written and drawn by Will for General Motors to give out to employees as part of a National Safety Council campaign. The narrative, such as it is, recounts the deaths of various workers who follow unsafe practices on the job. The visual style is humorous, with the characters depicted as reluctant ghosts, but the verbal thrust is straightforward and grim. Aside from the tall narrow format, this is a true comic book. Dated 1952, but may have been distributed for several years after that.

Hoods Up: Six issues of this digest sized comic book were produced by Eisner in 1953. They carry a 15 cent cover price and resemble the early issues of P*S (see above) in that they don't have slick covers. They were commissioned by the Fram Oil Filter Co. for distribution to Fram dealers and service station owners. Characters include Convertible Connie (a Connie Rodd clone with white hair), Earl Philter (a service station owner who slightly resembles Bleak in *The Spirit*, but has a cheerful demeanour), Argyle McSludge (a very close relative of Pvt. Fogsnof from P*S, if looks mean anything), Western Union Operator 25 (a beautiful redhead), Titus Tweak (an old miser) and . . . John Cameron Swayze (I). Together, this cast gives factual how-to info on installing Fram Oil Filters, selling customers on lube jobs, tire rotations, spark plug check-ups

and the like. Editor of the comic was Don Buckley, with Eisner listed as "art director," although it is obvious he wrote his own scripts, based on Buckley's ideas. Lettering is by Ben Oda.

The Fire Chief and The Safe Ol' Firefly: Another four colour digest size comic, but this one was bound horizontally. It was aimed at "students in the intermediate grades," according to the cover blurb, and is copyright 1952. Produced for the National Board of Fire Underwriters, it enlists children in a program of fire safety and fire prevention, utilizing a framework story which involves Fire Chief Smokeater, a talking Firefly, the town's mayor, and a host of unnamed boys and girls, one of whom is a dead ringer for the young Denny Colt. The script was probably a shop job, with Eisner writing the dialogue balloons and others supplying the typeset text portions. The art is by Eisner (pencils, plus inks on major figures) and Klaus Nordling (background pencils, plus inks on all but major figures).

Daredevil Davey, et al: Not every American Visuals comic or booklet from the early 1950s was written and drawn by Eisner. Some, like the *Daredevil Davey* series for the American Dental Association and the *Vacation Safety* giveaway, were produced by Klaus Nordling under Eisner's supervision. Others, like the beautiful Girl Scout booklet, were drawn by shop outsiders who were associated with the job customer in question. The Girl Scout item, for instance, was really a collaboration between American Visuals and a now-unknown woman artist who was in the employ of the Girl Scouts and did posters and ad work for them. Later American Visuals products, such as *Job Scene* (for the Department of Labor) and the numerous CMI safety posters (by Nordling), contain only the barest traces of Eisner layouts, script editing or fix-up inking.

RCA Victor Picture Sleeves: During 1957 and 1958, Eisner drew a series of approximately 45 picture sleeves for 45 rpm records manufactured by the RCA Victor company. With the exception of only one sleeve (for The Singing Dogs' "Hot Dog Rock'n'Roll b/w Hot Dog Boogie") these were distributed to disc jockeys only. Each sleeve came with a calendar for the month, some astrological birthday trivia, the birthdates of famous RCA recording artists born during the month, and a large music-oriented gag cartoon written by Bernard Miller of RCA (whom Eisner had met during the War) and drawn by Will, often in grease pencil or with an added wash tone effect. The gag cartoons covered several topics, among them the payola scandals, the popularity of Elvis Presley (just signed to RCA from Sun Records), slurs against rock'n'roll in general (as for instance in the conversation between a Gene Vincent type and an Eddie Cochran type, where the Vincent-like character is telling the Cochran-like one to keep his shoes shined or he'll give rock'n'roll a bad name: the implication is that with their long greasy hairdos, leather jackets and beat-up guitar cases, they already HAVE given the genre a bad name), and the usual pin-up girl efforts in which large breasts are sniggeringly linked to a belief that the singer must have "large lungs." There are also some general purpose illustrated mailing labels, all of which use some variant on the "We've got a hot record for you!" theme (delivery boy holds record encased in a block of ice and ice is melting, etc.) or the "This record is out of this world" theme (disc jockey curled up in foetal position in a sputnik, playing 45 on a portable phonograph, etc.). The Singing Dogs 45 sleeve did see general release to the public. The artwork depicts a group of dogs of various breeds dancing the jitterbug. The record is a novelty tune, with trained dogs barking a rock'n'roll melody on one side and a piano-style boogie on the other. All RCA artwork carries Eisner's signature (this was not the general practice for him during this phase of commercial artwork).

PAPERBACK AND HARDBACK BOOKS:

Beginning with his American Visuals days, Eisner has written and illustrated a number of books, some of them instructional in nature and some containing humour or fiction. A partial list follows. In addition to those named there are many others (mostly instructional or factual) for which Will only acted as editor, co-ordinator or shop manager. This list is definitely incomplete, in any case:



THE EISNER CHECKLIST

PART THREE

**ACTION
Mystery
IRONWODE**

America's Space Vehicles/Combat Weapons/Helicopters et al: A series of hardcover textbooks written by Eisner and his assistants, and illustrated with photos. They contain no Eisner artwork and are devoted to exactly those subjects named in the title, with no comic art or humorous overtones. Produced for the Army to be used in training courses during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

How Your Congressman Works/Model Trains et al: More hardcover textbooks, these designed for school-age children. No Eisner art at all. Late 1950s through early 1960s.

Gleeful Guide Series (Living With Astrology/Occult Cookery/How To Talk To Your Plants/Incredible Facts.../How To Avoid Death And Taxes): This series of 8½ x 11 paperbacks contained illustrated humour and true-fact trivia material. Although Eisner wrote most of the final scripts (and all of the gag cartoons), the text was prepared with the assistance of several people, such as Ivan Klapper, who also worked on some of the Army hardbacks and other Eisner-supervised factual material. A digest-sized edition of these books was later published for supermarket distribution, with no abridgement, simply a size reduction. All of these appeared first during the 1970s.

Children's Joke Books (Star Jaws/Ghostly Jokes & Ghostly Riddles/Dating & Hanging Out/1001 Outer Space Jokes/Television Jokes etc., etc., etc.): There are dozens of these books on the market, most of them sold to school children through their school book clubs. They are small paperbacks containing illustrated riddles, gag cartoons, trivia, short comic strip format jokes and satiric media references. All list Will Eisner as editor, and all have at least touches of Eisner artwork. The majority of the scripts and illustrations, however, are by students from Eisner's School of Visual Arts classes. Contributors include Barry Caldwell, Keith Dieczun and Bob Pizzo, the latter two currently shop assistants who prepare the gray tones for the Kitchen Spirit magazine from guides made up by Will. The strange thing about the artwork in the joke books, to those who know Eisner's style, is that he often does "fix-up" inking for his students. It is thus not uncommon to see a monster or ghost drawn by a student — with clothing folds or drop shadows by Will. Almost every book also contains something or other — a page or two — written and drawn entirely by Eisner. In a few of the joke books, the Eisner material is rather prominent, but in most it takes a back seat to the work by assistants and students. Very often the lettering on titles, or even in balloons, is by Eisner, or he has roughly pencilled the figures in, as can be determined by his characteristic positioning of the body. The humour in these books is as juvenile as the audience aimed for, but serious Eisner fans interested in playing art-spotting games will find them well worth the small investment. New titles appear fairly regularly; the series began during the 1970s.

Will Eisner's Spirit Casebook of True Haunted Houses and Ghost Stories: This might be more properly classified as a SPIRIT item, but its thematic content — the occult — and its format — a small paperback — link it to the Gleeful Guides and children's joke books. At best it is an uncomfortable hybrid. The format is very un-Spirit-like, to say the least. Twenty-two "factual" accounts of hauntings and ghost sightings are recounted, and each is introduced by Denny Colt. There are illustrations on every page, but the dialogue and narrative passages are typeset, not in balloons, except for the words addressed to the reader by The Spirit, which are hand lettered and in balloons, although the figure never appears in conventional comic style panels. This book was published by Tempo in 1976. The original release featured an extremely (and uncharacteristically) gruesome cover by Eisner, depicting a screaming woman with bloody stumps where her hands had been cut off, running across a gothic landscape. This cover was met with rejection by the buying public and all later copies have a non-Eisner cover which shows a demented one-eyed sailor in a striped nightcap, wearing gold earrings and cackling insanely in the hold of some nameless sailing ship.

A Contract With God... And Other Tenement Stories: This volume, published in 1978 by Baronet in both hardback and paperback editions, is probably too well known to readers of this magazine to require further explanation, but for the record, it is a quartet of interrelated short stories set in a Bronx tenement during the early 1930s. The first story concerns itself with man's relationship to God in the face of the loss of a loved one. The

second and third are short pieces with tragi-comic twist endings in which the building's super and an itinerant street singer meet with O. Henry-like fates. The last story, another long one, is a more-or-less autobiographical account of certain incidents in Will's youth, with not even the names changed to protect the innocent. With its fluid use of panel/page relationships and its removal from the limitations of heroic genre fiction, this book is certainly Will's most ambitious project to date.

The Spirit Colouring Book: An oversized volume collecting some of Eisner's favourite Spirit splash pages. Each is accompanied by a short plot synopsis of the story in which it appeared. Poorhouse Press, 1974.

Les Boucaniers/Hawks of the Seas: A very limited edition reprint of about one-third of the Hawks of the Seas pages (no. 41-70) in English, plus about another third of them in French (no. 6, 9, 12-17, 19-25, 27-40) and in cut-up daily form (approximately the last 20 pages' worth). Published by Pacific Comics Club of Tahiti in 1973, this is a very large book, virtually tabloid in size. The introduction is in French, with a very short English forward added.

Hawks of the Seas/ The Treasure of Sea Gull Island: This reprints, in English, the "flashback sequence" (pages 55-58) from Hawks of the Seas, plus the last 30 pages (no. 93-123). Published by Vintage Comics' Art Collectors, no date [early 1970s], an Australian group of fans.

Almost Too Obscure To Mention Dept.: Although to readers of this magazine Eisner is perceived primarily as a cartoonist — and a narrative cartoonist at that — he has always produced a quantity of commercial art and commercial writing, much of which doesn't even bear his name. His years of experience in the field of publishing have given him a reputation as a book packager who can be relied upon to come up with novel ideas and a saleable finished product in areas far removed from comics, or even fiction, for that matter. It may surprise some, but the Bartender's Guide published by Baronet was an Eisner creation, and even sports a cover lettered by him, although his name appears nowhere in the finished volume. Likewise a forthcoming nutrition guide and an illustrated edition of Robert's Rules Of Order are both Will's brainchildren.

NEWSPAPER ODDITIES AND RARITIES:

Odd Fact: In 1974 Bell-McClure syndicated Eisner's Odd Fact panel cartoon series. This consisted of strange-but-true material ala Ripley's Believe It Or Not or Eisner's own late 1930s News Facts panel (signed "by George") which ran in Fiction House's Jumbo Comics and was inadvertently left off the "early works" part of the checklist.

Rip Roscoe: A series of full page newspaper ads for New York Telephone, told in comic book form. They star detective Rip Roscoe and his touch tone telephone. 1976.

The [New York Times] Spirit Strip: On August 16, 1976, an editorial cartoon by Eisner, entitled The Spirit, was printed. It is in the form of a daily strip and it not about Denny Colt. The "Spirit" in question is the ghost of Richard M. Nixon, who is seen haunting the smoke filled rooms of the Republican National Convention.

POSTER AND PORTFOLIO WORK:

Spirit Posters: There were two of these published during the 1970s. One was an enlargement of the cover of Warren's Spirit magazine no. 3, coloured by Richard Corben (minus the various cover blurbs, of course). The second, printed in Spain, but distributed in America, was based on the original cover for John Law Comics, the one which had been reworked into the splash page of Spirit Section no. 511 (3/12/50) "The Jewel of Gizeh" and later transformed into the cover of Warren's first issue of Spirit reprints.

JOURNEY TO AN INNER WORLD

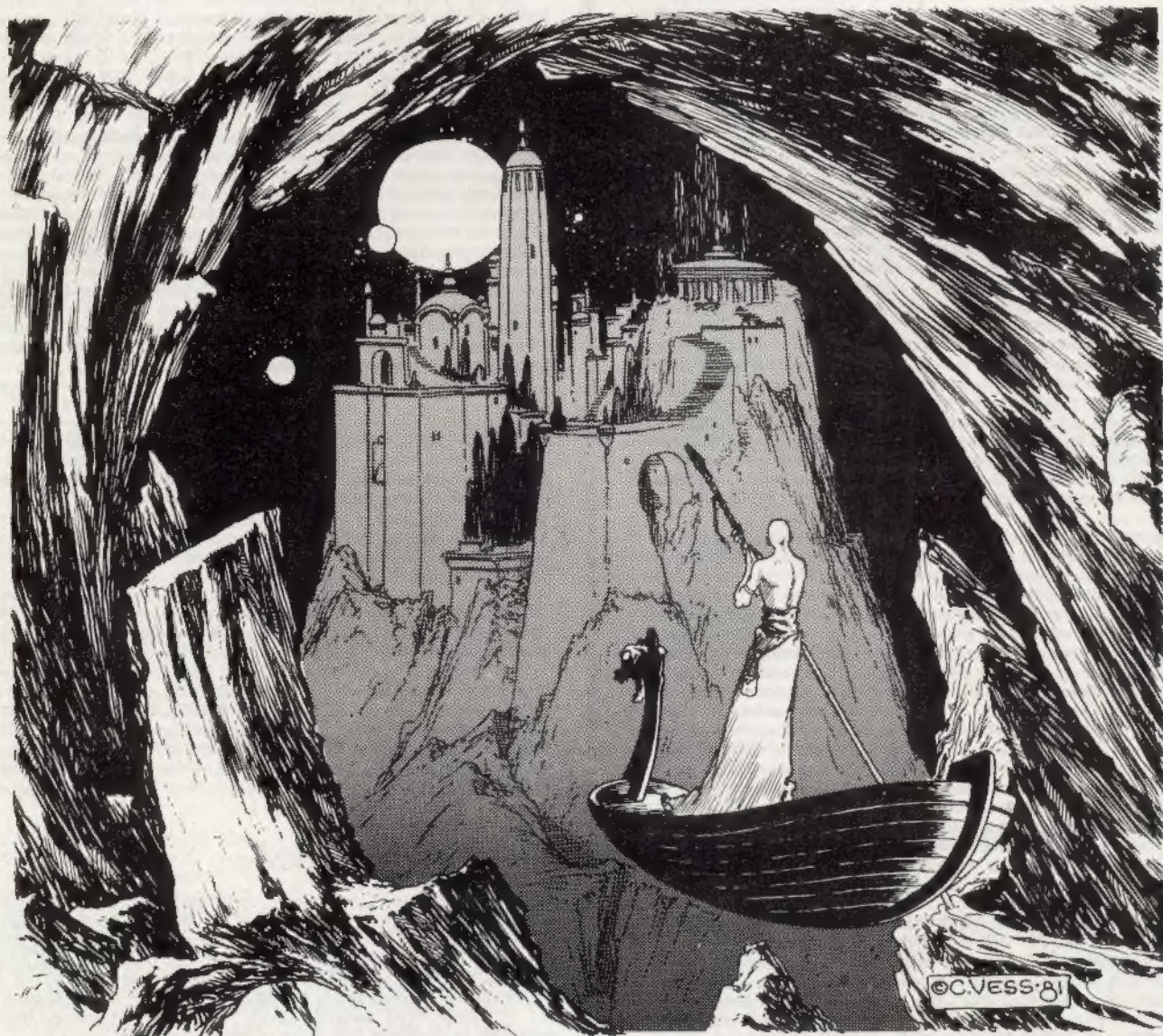
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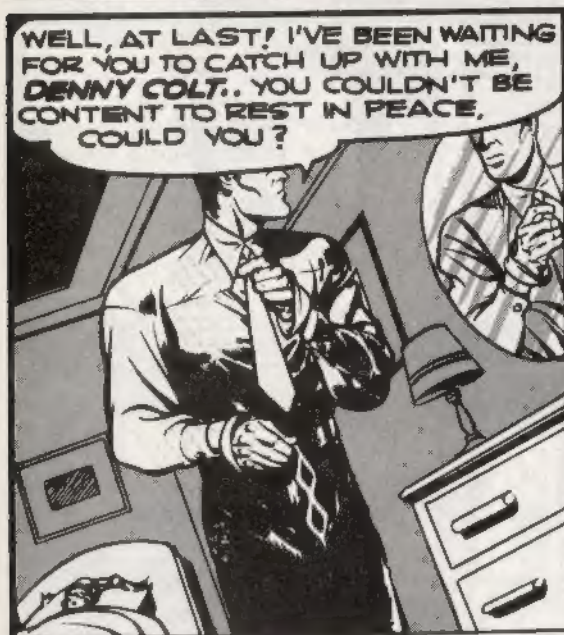


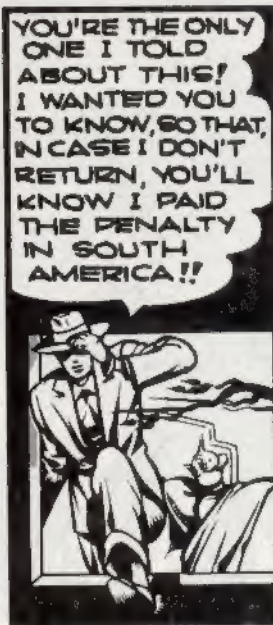
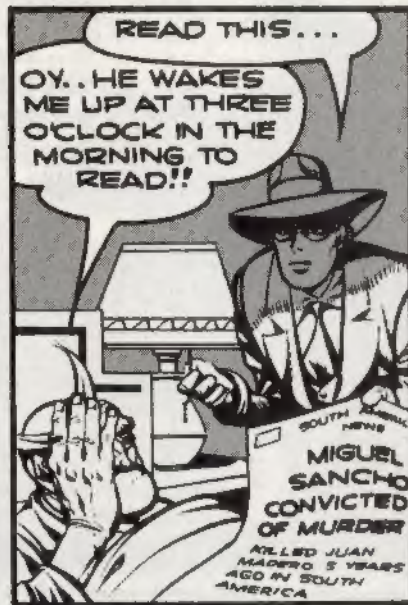
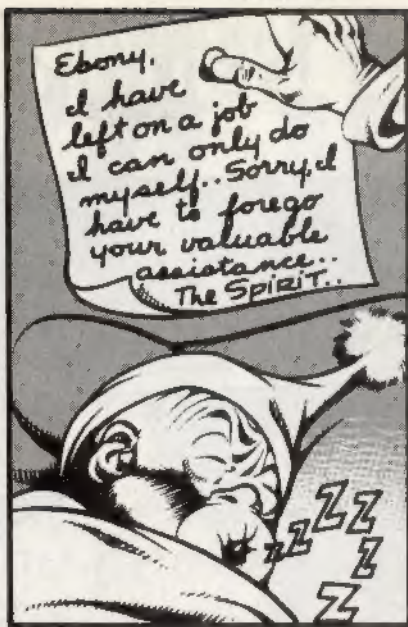
**WANTED
THE
SPIRIT**

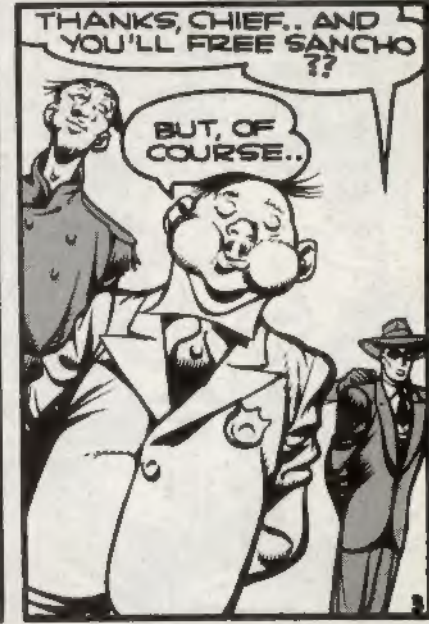
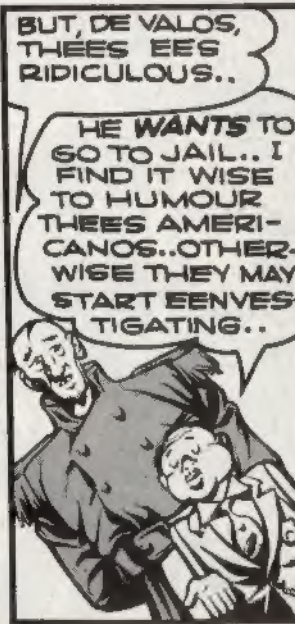
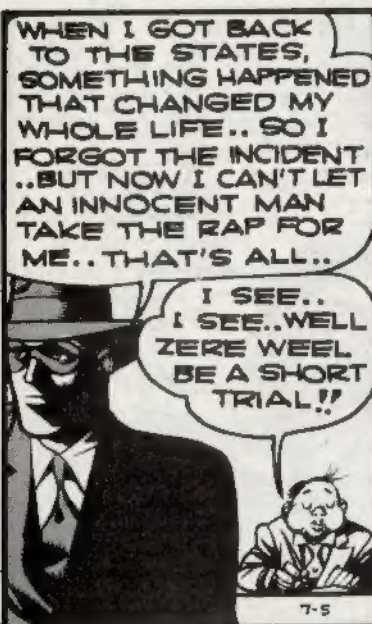
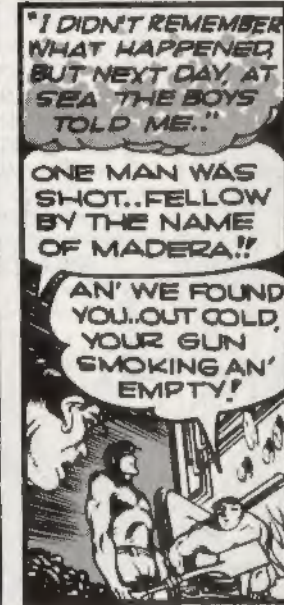
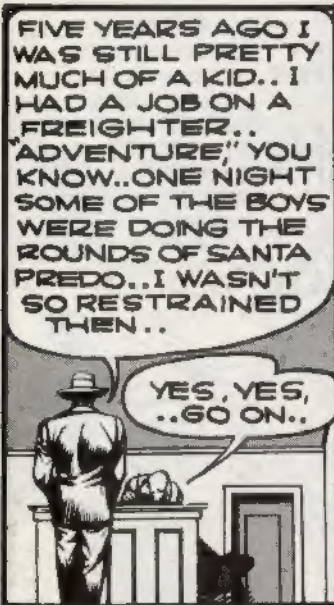
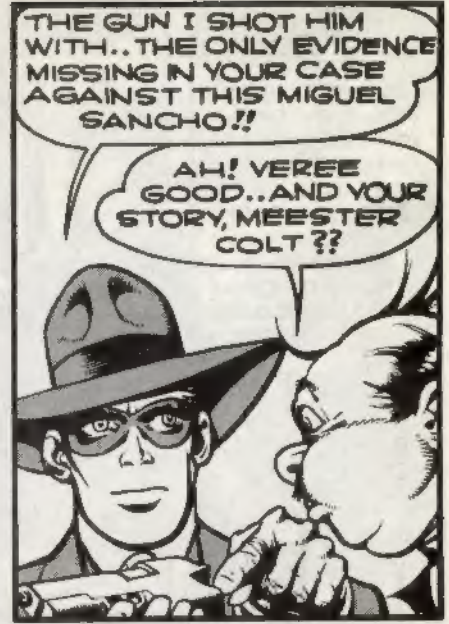
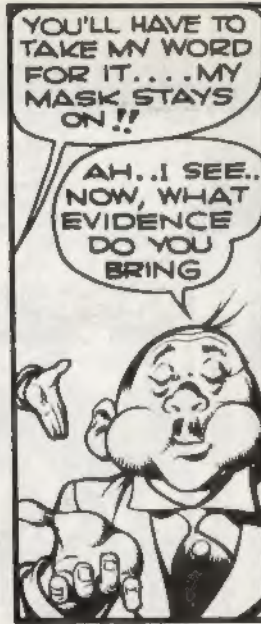
FOR MURDER

DESCRIPTION
 HEIGHT - 6' 2"
 WEIGHT - 192 lbs.
 EYES - BLUE
 HAIR - BLACK

FOUND IN A COMA AND BURIED FOR DEAD.. DENNY COLT, YOUNG CRIMINOLOGIST, AROSE AS THE SPIRIT, CHALLENGER OF CRIME AND CHAMPION OF THE RIGHT.. HOWEVER, HE LIVES AN OUTLAW, HIS HOME AND LABORATORY DEEP UNDERGROUND BENEATH THE VERY GRAVE WHERE HE WAS BURIED..







BACK IN CENTRAL CITY...

COMMISSIONER DOLAN THE SPIRIT'S DONE DISAPPEARED.

NOW DON'T WORRY, EBONY.. THE SPIRIT CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF



MEANWHILE... ON THE ROCK BOUND PENAL ISLAND OFF SANTA PEDRO...

I'VE SWEATED THIS STRETCH OUT LONG ENOUGH.. SANCJO IS FREE.. JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED.. AND I CAN BE MORE USEFUL ELSEWHERE ..THEY SAY ONLY DEAD MEN LEAVE THIS ISLAND... WELL..



DENNY COLT WILL HAVE TO DIE AGAIN.. IT'S A 100 TO 1 CHANCE, BUT IT'S MY ONLY ONE...



IN ABOUT AN HOUR THIS CAPSULE WILL HAVE PUT ME IN A DEATH LIKE COMA AND THEY'LL TOSS ME OUT TO SEA... I SURVIVED MY LAST BURIAL ..BUT THEN, THERE WERE NO SHARKS IN THAT GRAVEYARD...



BUT I'VE GOT TO RISK IT.. HUH?

AT LAST I HAVE THE CHANCE TO TALK TO YOU, DENNY COLT.. YOU WERE A FOOL ..A WELL MEANING FOOL TO GEEVE YOURSELF UP.. I AM MIGUEL SANCJO!



SANCJO? THEN THEY DIDN'T FREE YOU? BUT YOU'RE INNOCENT..

SPEAK SOFTLY... YES I AM INNOCENT.. BUT SO ARE YOU ..HERE COMES ZE GUARD.. WE CANNOT TALK.. I WEEL TAP OUT MY STORY ON ZE ROCK.. SHHHH !!



"MADERO WAS MURDERED BY DE VALO'S MEN.. THEY MEANT IT TO LOOK LIKE A BRAWL AND LET YOU ESCAPE AFTER USING AND PLANTING YOUR GUN.."



"LATER THEY PINNED THE MURDER ON ME.. FAKING EVIDENCE.. THEY WANTED ME JAILED FOR POLITICAL REASONS.."



YOU SEE, DE VALOS EES A FRIEND OF ZE AXIS, AND I WAS GROWING TOO POPULAR CHAMPION-ING ZE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY..

THEN I'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE

OW!..AND THAT CAPSULE WILL TAKE EFFECT IN AN HOUR..



SUDDENLY THE SPIRIT
TURNS VICIOUSLY UPON
THE OLDER MAN...

WHY YOU SNIVELING
LITTLE PUP...!!!
YOU DOUBLE-DEALING
RAT...

CAN YOU SWIM?

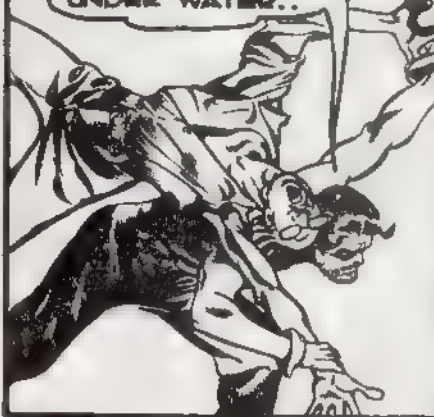
DIABLO!
CARAMBA!

LIKE A
FISH!



YOU'D SELL YOUR GRAND-
MOTHER'S LAST GOLD
TOOTH IF IT WOULD GET
YOU IN WITH THE
OFFICIALS... YOU OLD..

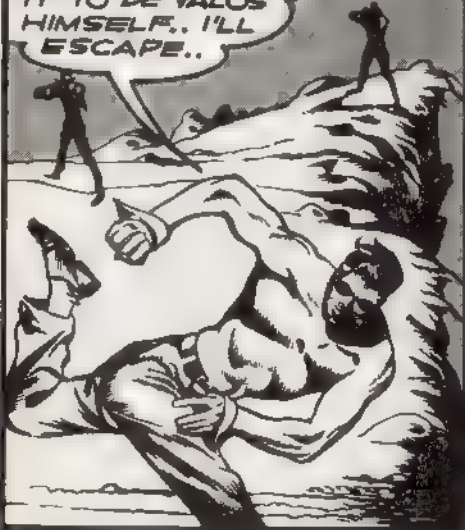
WHEN I THROW YOU OVER,
MAKE FOR THE REEF
UNDER WATER..



I'LL BE THERE..
SQUEAL ABOUT MY ESCAPE
PLANS WILL YOU?? WELL,
NOW YOU CAN TELL IT
TO THE SHARKS..



BUT I'LL ESCAPE..
THEY CAN TELL
IT TO DE VALOS
HIMSELF.. I'LL
ESCAPE..



OW! THAT
WAS TOO CLOSE
I DON'T WANT
TO BE THAT
DEAD..



HAH! AND TO
WHERE DEED
YOU THEENK
YOU WERE
RUNNING

AND THEES
EES ZE
ONE WHO
BEGGED TO
HAVE
ACCOMODATIONS
HERE!



ZE
OTHER
ONE
?

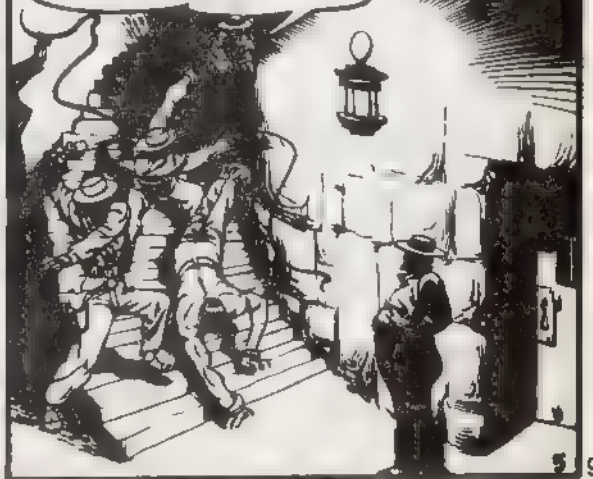
HE MADE FOR
ZE REEF, EH?
HAH, JUST
KEEP AN EYE
ON HEEM.. ZE
TIDE WEELE
COME EEN
TONIGHT AND
DO ZE REST..

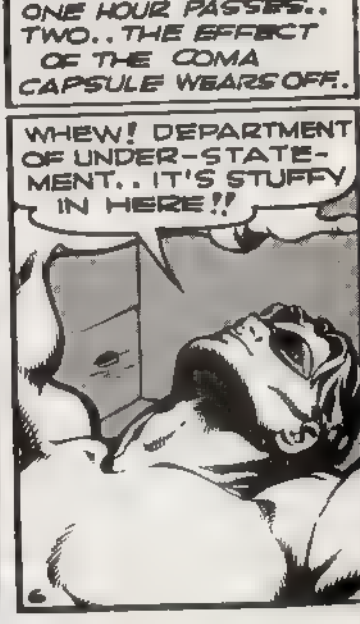
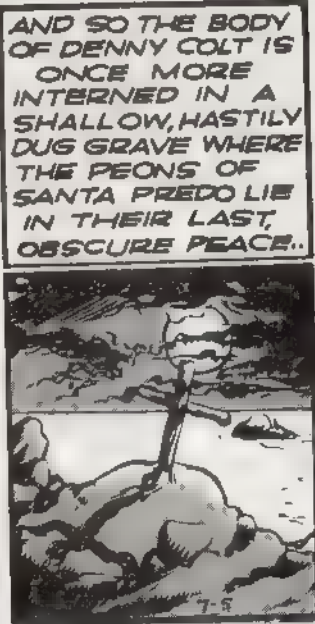
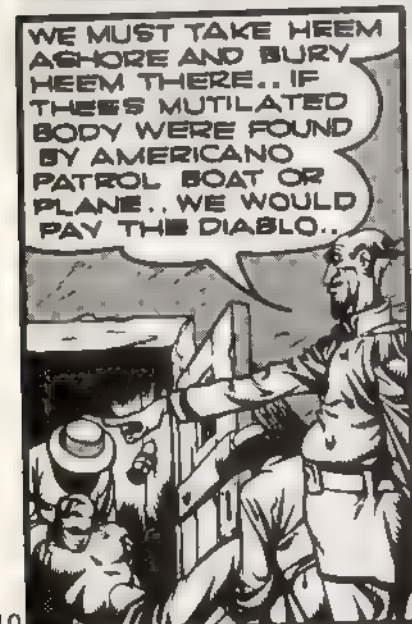
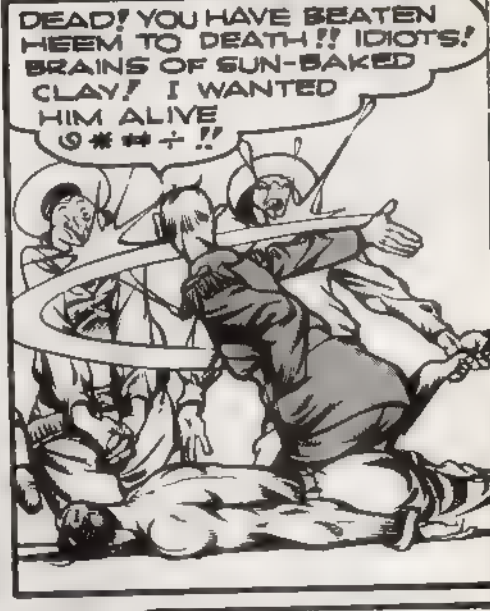


BUT AS FOR YOU!
WE HAVE HAD NO
EXAMPLE FOR ZE
MEN FOR SO LONG
A TIME...



ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES!!
CRAWL TO YOUR NEW
QUARTERS EEN SOLITARY
CONFINEMENT.. GO TO WORK
ON HEEM, MEN!





SO, THE AMERICANO TRIED TO ESCAPE? HOW INTERESTING... I SHALL SPEAK TO HEEM...

HAH! YOU THOUGHT YOU BOUGHT A TWO-WAY TEECKET TO HADES... DID YOU REELY THEENK ZERE WAS SUCH A THING?

HAH? ANSWER ME!! HAH?

DEAD!

DEAD! YOU HAVE BEATEN HEEM TO DEATH!! IDIOTS! BRAINS OF SUN-BAKED CLAY! I WANTED HIM ALIVE
@*#*+!!

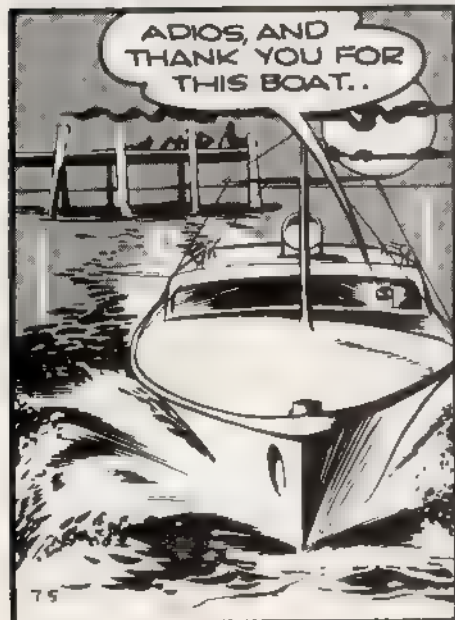
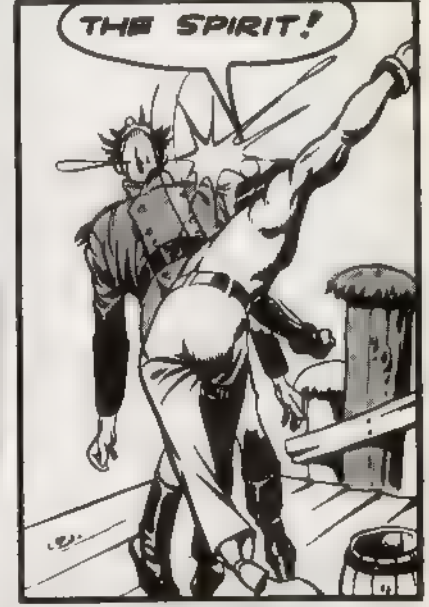
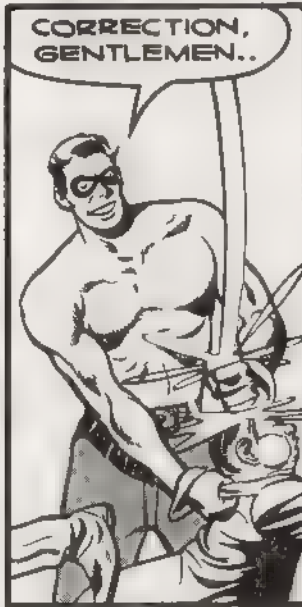
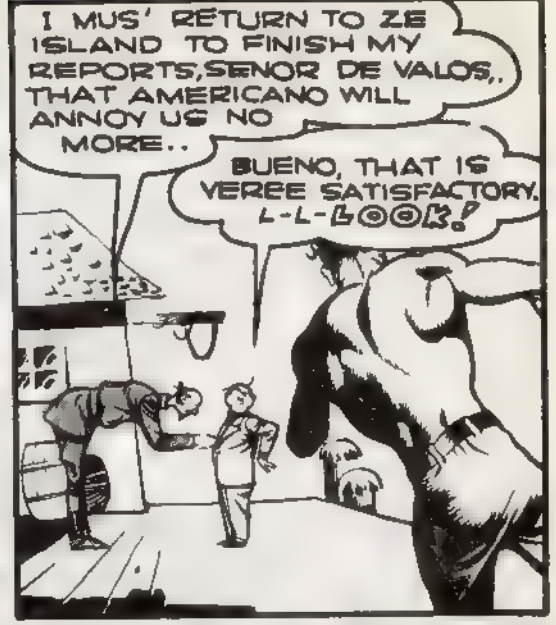
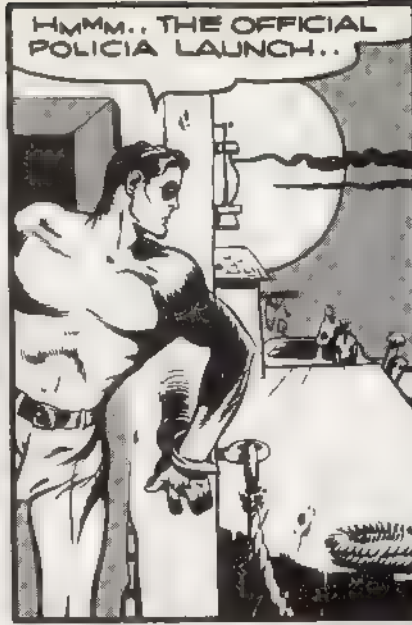
WE MUST TAKE HEEM ASHORE AND BURY HEEM THERE.. IF THE'S MUTILATED BODY WERE FOUND BY AMERICANO PATROL BOAT OR PLANE.. WE WOULD PAY THE DIABLO..

AND SO THE BODY OF DENNY COLT IS ONCE MORE INTERNED IN A SHALLOW, HASTILY DUG GRAVE WHERE THE PEONS OF SANTA PREDO LIE IN THEIR LAST, OBSCURE PEACE..

MEANWHILE THE TIDE IS SLOWLY RISING ABOUT THE REEF WHERE MIGUEL SANCHO WAITS..

ONE HOUR PASSES.. TWO.. THE EFFECT OF THE COMA CAPSULE WEARS OFF..

WHEW! DEPARTMENT OF UNDER-STATEMENT.. IT'S STUFFY IN HERE!!





ZE POLICE
HAVE COME
BACK.. NO
EET.. EES..

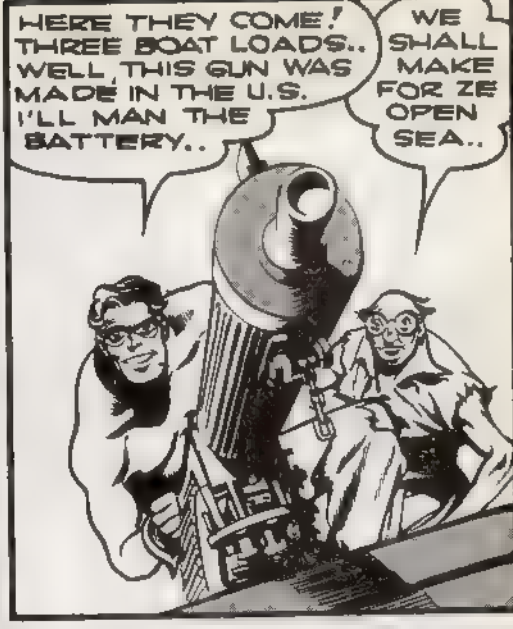


HOP IN,
MIGUEL..

YOU ARE
A WORKER
OF MIRACLES,
FRAN'..

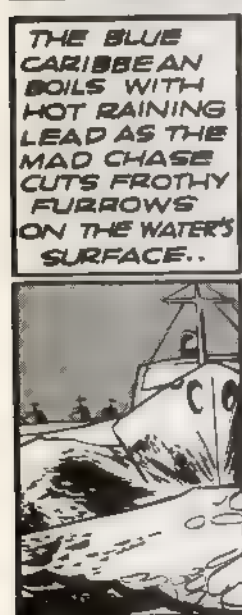


NO! NOT QUITE
THEY'VE
SPOTTED US..



HERE THEY COME!
THREE BOAT LOADS..
WELL, THIS GUN WAS
MADE IN THE U.S.
I'LL MAN THE
BATTERY..

WE
SHALL
MAKE
FOR ZE
OPEN
SEA..



THE BLUE
CARIBBEAN
BOILS WITH
HOT RAINING
LEAD AS THE
MAD CHASE
CUTS FROTHY
FURROWS
ON THE WATER'S
SURFACE..



BUT AT LAST..

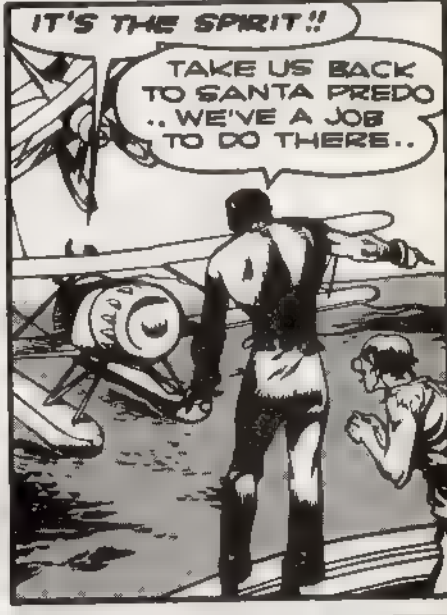
AH! THEY HAVE
RUN OUT OF
AMMUNITION!
NOW WE HAVE
THEM..

YES? BUT
WHAT IS THAT
SOUND??
PLANES?



AMERICAN
PATROL PLANES
..WE'RE SAVED,
MIGUEL!

LOOK, HOW
ZE RATS
SCATTER..



IT'S THE SPIRIT!!

TAKE US BACK
TO SANTA PREDO
..WE'VE A JOB
TO DO THERE..



SEVERAL DAYS LATER
..IN THE HOME OF
COMMISSIONER DOLAN

MISTUH DOLAN!
MIST' SPIRIT DONE
CAUGHT A BUNCH
O' FIFTH COLUMNISTS
DOWN IN SOUTH
AMERICA!!



YESSIR! THAT SPIRIT
BOSS OF YOURS
IS QUITE A CRIME
FIGHTER..AHEM!
ALMOST IN MY
CLASS..

YO' BET..
BEST IN DE
WORLD..



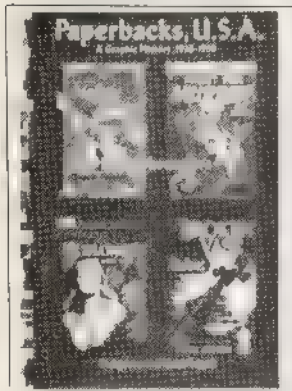
DID I HEAR
MY NAME
MENTIONED
???



YEAH.. WE WAS JUST
SAYING WHAT A
PUNK JOB YOU DID
ON THAT SOUTH
AMERICAN CASE..

AN' YO' WOULD
CAUGHT A HUNDRED
MO' SPIES WIF'
MAH VALUABLE
ASSISTANCE..

TEN FANTASTIC PRODUCTS



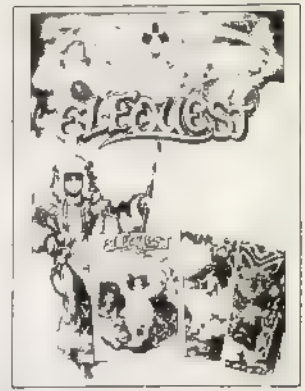
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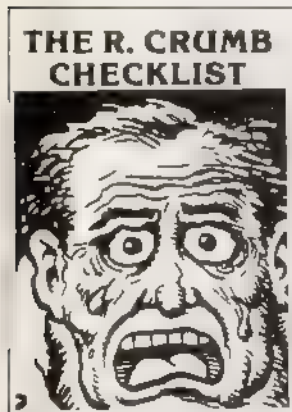
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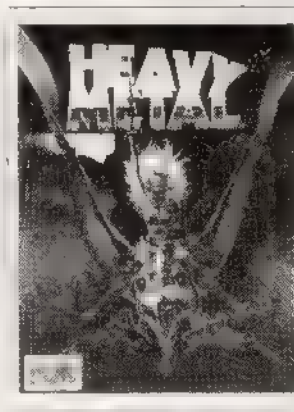
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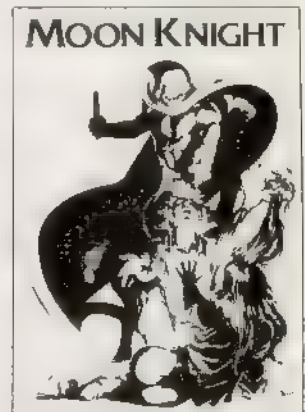
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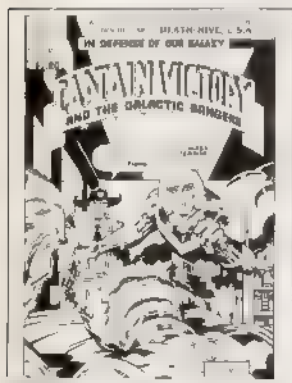
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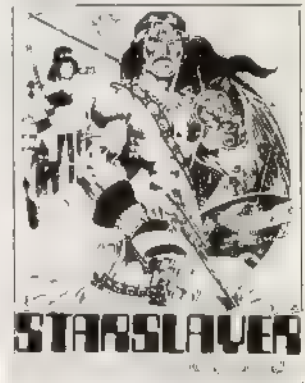
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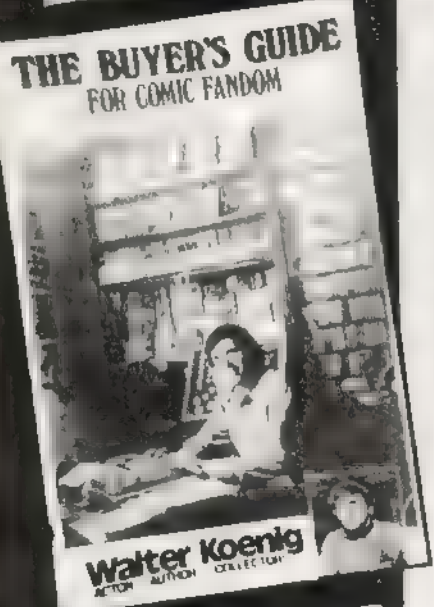
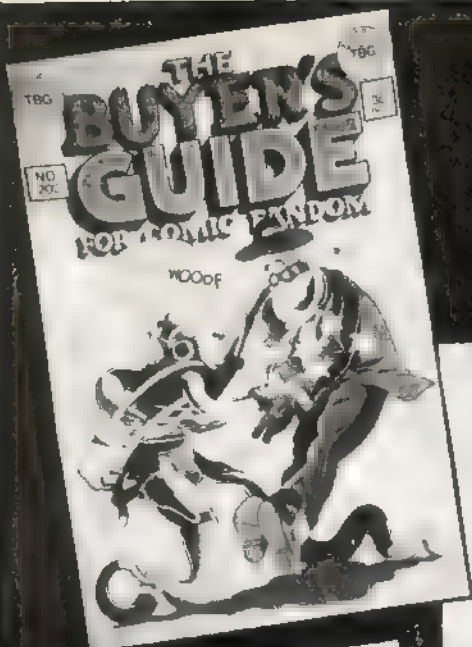
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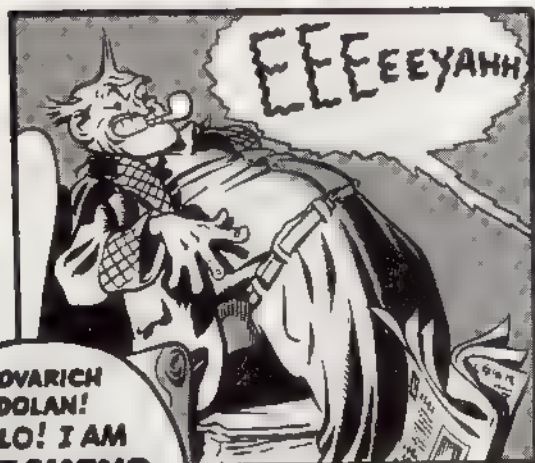
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ACTION
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TOVARICH
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HALLO! I AM
NIECHEVO,
THE GREAT
SIBERIAN
SLEUTH!

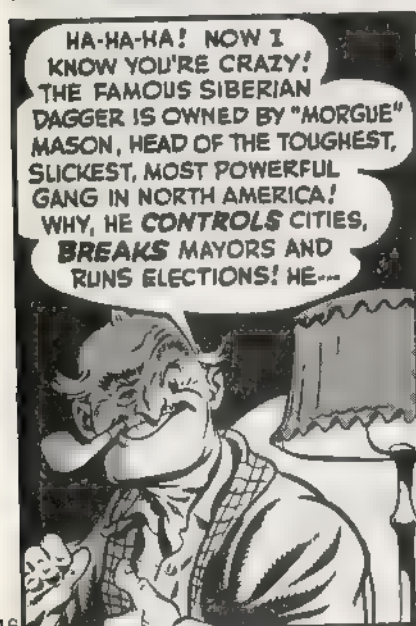
SNAP

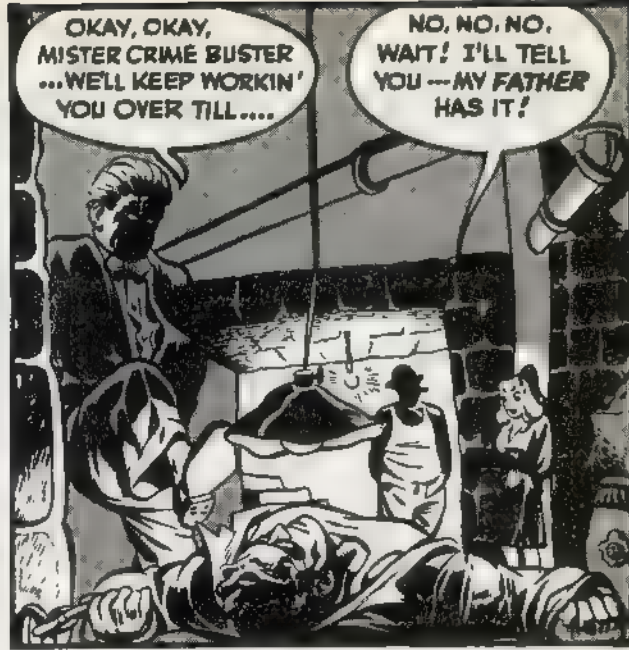


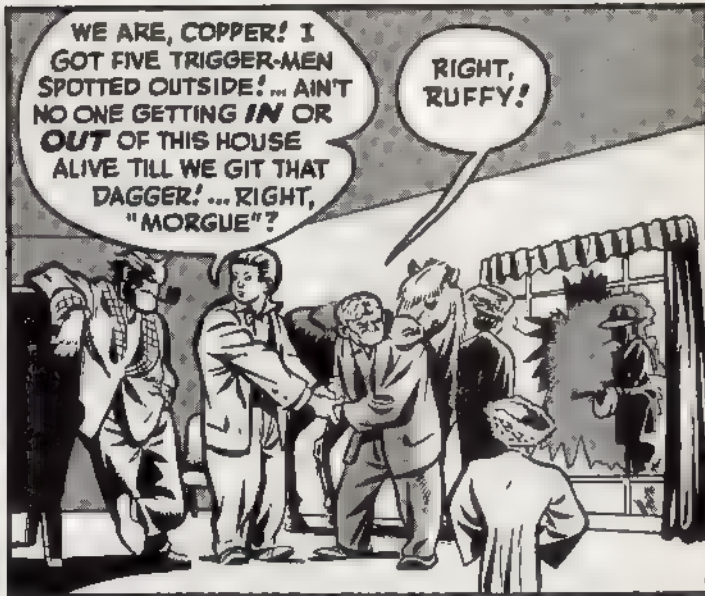
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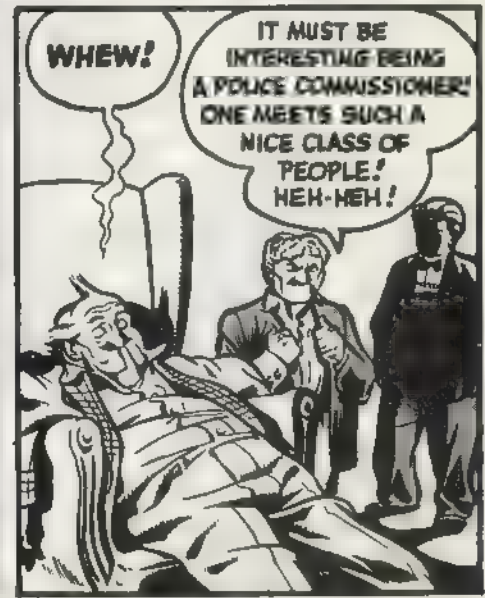
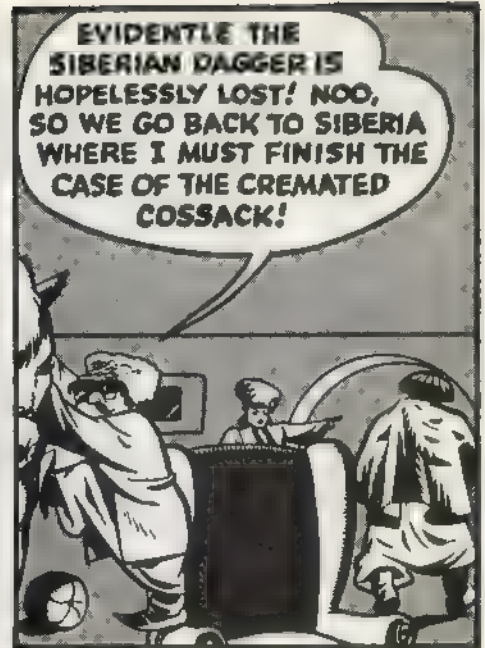
by
Will Eisner













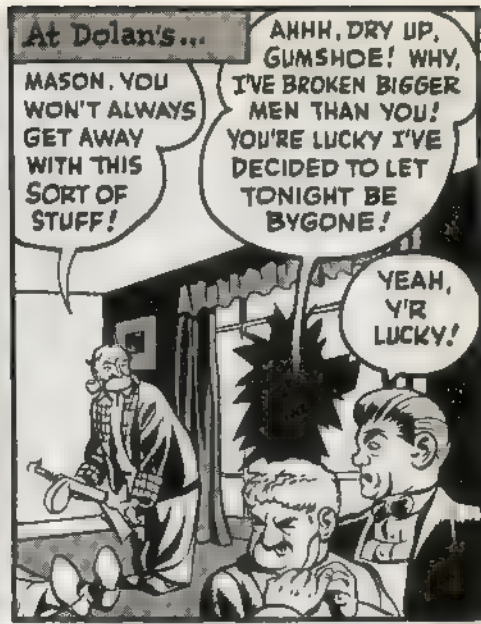
WHERE'S MASON'S FILES? TALK OR I'LL GIVE YOU THE SAME BEATING THEY GAVE ME!

Ooow! OKAY, OKAY!



MORGUE AIN'T GONNA LIKE THIS... OUCH!

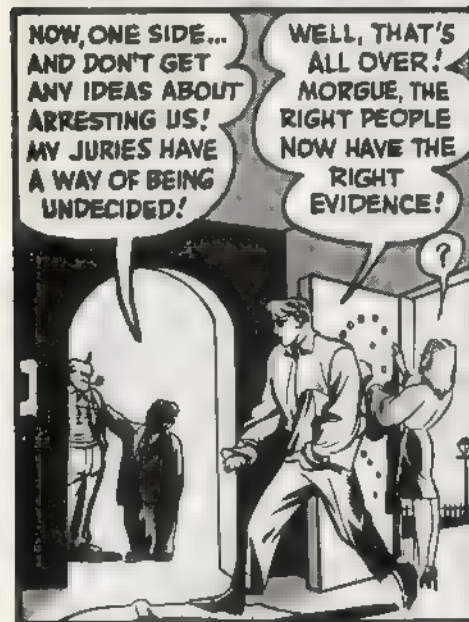
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!



At Dolan's... MASON, YOU WON'T ALWAYS GET AWAY WITH THIS SORT OF STUFF!

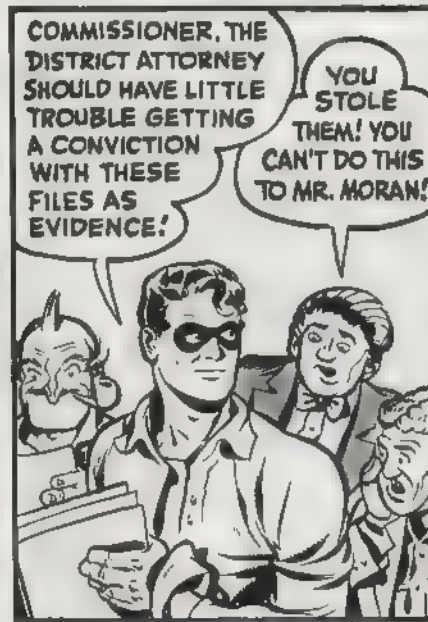
AHHH, DRY UP, GUMSHOE! WHY, I'VE BROKEN BIGGER MEN THAN YOU! YOU'RE LUCKY I'VE DECIDED TO LET TONIGHT BE BYGONE!

YEAH, Y'R LUCKY!



NOW, ONE SIDE... AND DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT ARRESTING US! MY JURIES HAVE A WAY OF BEING UNDECIDED!

WELL, THAT'S ALL OVER! MORGUE, THE RIGHT PEOPLE NOW HAVE THE RIGHT EVIDENCE!



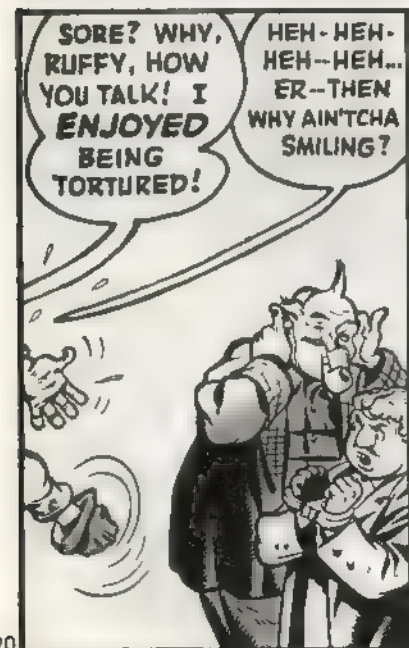
COMMISSIONER, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY SHOULD HAVE LITTLE TROUBLE GETTING A CONVICTION WITH THESE FILES AS EVIDENCE!

YOU STOLE THEM! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO MR. MORAN!



NOT ONLY CAN I DO THAT, BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT.. ELSE!

HEH-HEH! Y'R NOT SORE AT ME FER KICKING YOU --ARE YOU, SPIRIT?



SORE? WHY, RUFFY, HOW YOU TALK! I ENJOYED BEING TORTURED!

HEH-HEH-HEH... ER--THEN WHY AIN'TCHA SMILING?



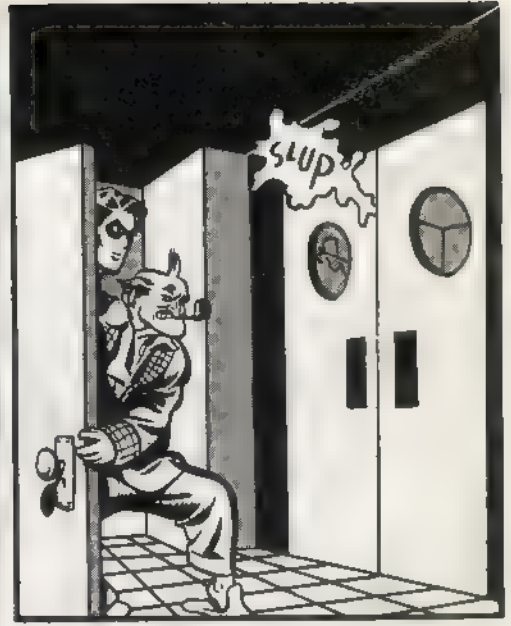
BECAUSE I'M NOT HAPPY!



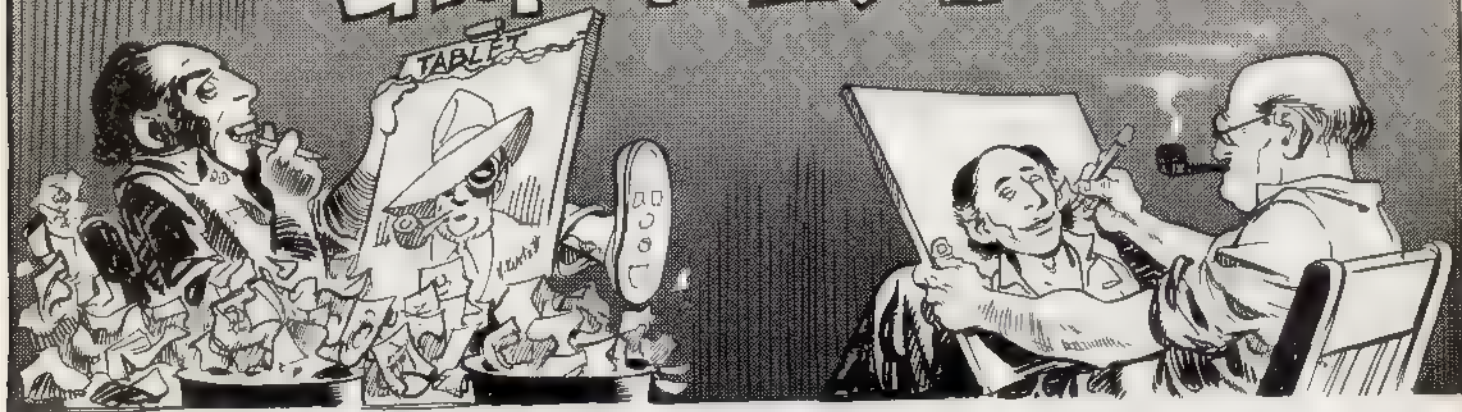
HEY! OOF! DOLAN!



DOGGONE IT, DOLAN! I THOUGHT IT WAS POKER Y' INVITED ME TO, TONIGHT!



SHOP TALK 2



HARVEY KURTZMAN

Harvey Kurtzman hardly needs an introduction for comics fans. He is one of the most respected figures in the field. Kurtzman made his first big mark as editor of and contributor to the powerful Frontline Combat series for E.C. Comics. Later he started the enormously popular *Mad*, only to leave after a disagreement with E.C. publisher Bill Gaines. Kurtzman then put together a string of memorable satire magazines (*Humbug*, *Trump*, *Help!*) before settling down on a long run of *Little Annie Fanny* color comics for Hugh Hefner's *Playboy*. Will Eisner conducted this interview in the summer of 1981.

EISNER: Let's get a handle on what is the main characteristic of your work.

KURTZMAN: Well, I never think of myself as a cartoonist possibly in the way that you do, in that I do very little finished drawing. I spend most of my time drawing behind the scenes. I don't know how it's come to that. I used to do a lot of my own finished drawing but as time's gone on, I find myself spread a lot thinner. I cover a lot more territory by working on the first and second step that someone else eventually brings to a finish. I can tell you about a lot of systems and techniques that I'm involved in, color, black & white, adventure cartoons,

cartoon cartoons... What do you want to know?

EISNER: I want to get into that. You've done just fine. Can we say since you do not do finished work that you're nevertheless working on the board; that there are physical things you do between the time you start with the concept and idea and when you give it to someone to finish? Would that be a fair idea to talk about?

KURTZMAN: Probably the most useful thing I could tell you about is the working of the idea up to a finished *Little Annie Fanny* color page for *Playboy* magazine.

EISNER: Let's start with that. We're mostly concerned here with your technique, your work style.

KURTZMAN: I'm a great believer in planning and systems. I start with a story board, as so many of us do. I make a thumbnail storyboard, then I make a larger story board that determines exact use of space and tone and dialogue. I usually submit this story board to *Playboy* before I go ahead.

EISNER: Normally the way I do it, and a lot of other artists too. So, you don't work from a script? You start with an idea... you're your own writer? You start with an *Annie Fanny* idea? With a concept? Do you write the story out roughly on a slip of pap-

er in longhand or typewriter, a *précis* or summary first?

KURTZMAN: The story starts with a paragraph that tries to determine theme and the punch ending. Hollywood would call this a "treatment." From there I go on to my thumbnail sketches. My first breakdown of the story is in terms of pictures, not in finished words. Once I have my pictures, then I know what the characters have to say.

EISNER: So, you're writing a storyboard! The procedure then is as if we were making a movie. I see you taking a series of panels on a sheet of paper and squiggling in characters in various postures and positions and little snatches of words and then you go back over and put the words in on top of these characters.

KURTZMAN: Then I turn to a yellow Nixon writing tablet and I start writing dialogue with constant reference to the little thumbnail storyboards. At that point I try to get all the words down.

EISNER: The word tablet to me seems very old fashioned, my father always used to refer to it as a "tablet", writing on a "tablet." An "old world" phrase, Harv.

KURTZMAN: Okay, so after I have all the words down, then I really start a storyboard,



a super storyboard. Now what I can do once I have all the words down is I can measure the balloon space, the text areas. You have to start figuring what to fill your space with. EISNER: That's composing. You're composing a panel.

KURTZMAN: Yes, first I start putting the text down in a series of balloons. Then, after I know how much text I have in each square, ...boy, this sounds dull as hell!

EISNER: No, no, this will be interesting...

KURTZMAN: Then I start sketching compositions. I get a pile of white 8x10 sheets and I compose very loosely because a composition is best come by when you have the fewest constrictions. So, I don't try to line up my boxes and put little finished layouts into them. I scribble on random sheets of throwaway tablet paper and leave the composition loose enough so that it starts taking shape by itself. Sometimes it runs right off the paper. So I'll tack on another piece of paper or sometimes I can fit it into a little inch square sketch. Sometimes I have to keep doing it over and over to balance the elements of text, action, and the objects required in the panel.

EISNER: Is this without regard to the total of the given page? Are you working by page or by panel?

KURTZMAN: I already know roughly from my thumbnail sketches, what the page has. But now composing each box within the page becomes the problem. If I've made a lot of noise here it is to get that point across, that my compositions are eventually very, very tight.

EISNER: I'd like to pursue that point because tight composition is something that needs to be explained.

KURTZMAN: I'm talking to the composition master. [chuckles]

EISNER: I have no comment on this at this time. Obviously I'm for tight compositions too. When you're composing, when you say "tight composition," is it in a given panel for a preconceived action or idea or ...?

KURTZMAN: It's preconceived but you know with writing -- and you hear writers say this again and again -- they make a rough outline of what they're going to say and then when they actually start breaking it down it takes on a life of its own.

EISNER: Well, let's say it's a kind of free association. Would you buy that?

KURTZMAN: Yes, free association, but the composition takes you where you really didn't know you were going because you didn't know the details of the conditions you were running into. Again, it's like writing, you know where you're supposed to go but you really don't know the details until the writing takes you to the problems and then you start solving the problems. It's like you might "know" you're driving cross-town, but you don't know exactly what the road is like until you get to it.

EISNER: At what point do you stop? What do you mean by "tight?" When I, for ex-



1948 "Hey Look!" that parodies Will Eisner, as well as Al Capp, Chester Gould and Chic Young.

ample, get a composition that I feel solves my problem I stop. I may give it two tries, three tries or one try. At what point do you stop?

KURTZMAN: Well, I stop when I feel I've got it right. And how do I know I've got it right? Well you stand back and you look and you tilt your head this way and that way and you say "Ah! I've got it right!" It's the same when you make a sketch before a finished drawing, you scribble down twenty lines and you know that one of those lines is the right one. Well, how do you know which is the right one? You look at it and it "looks" like the right one. Your "talent" tells you it looks right.

EISNER: Tailing on to that idea ... Once in your studio you blew my mind completely when you showed me a series of work you had been doing which had seven overlays. I staggered out of your house dazzled! I had never seen anything like that before in my life. I thought I was an impossible "kvetch" in dealing with my own work but you were way the hell above that. Is this a standard pattern? Explain the seven overlays.

KURTZMAN: My eternal struggle with my art work is the taking control of the medium and putting down on the paper what I have inside my head. It just takes seven or eight overlays adjustments to duplicate what I have in my head. Now that may just be because I'm a moron and I shouldn't be in this business.

EISNER: No comment! [laughter]

KURTZMAN: Basically it's the same thing as I said before when you make a sketch. You draw ten lines and you pick out the one that you like. The lines in a sketch are a system of adjusting. You adjust till you

get a concept that feels good, that looks good. Now "why" it looks good is just too complicated to explain. That's where talent comes in.

EISNER: No-- I don't think anybody could explain that.

KURTZMAN: You look at it and you know that it's right. Well it takes me several layers of experiment to get that right line. I'm oversimplifying.

EISNER: Is this procedure, this series of several overlays, pretty much a pattern in everything you do? Does this apply not only to Annie Fanny but other recent stuff I've seen you do?

KURTZMAN: I always plan, plan, plan. Some things take less than others. Annie Fanny is terribly complicated for me because it uses literal drawing and it uses color. We know color and we work very hard at it. That takes a certain amount of planning. When I do cartoon comix ... funny, funny comix ... the steps are much simpler.

EISNER: Then you're completing it yourself in many cases aren't you? In the case of Annie, you know someone else is going to pick it up and complete it ... right?

KURTZMAN: I work Annie pretty much to the drawing finish, that is, the finish before it goes to color and then Will takes it and he rearranges everything.

EISNER: That's Will Elder.

KURTZMAN: Will Elder. And then the polishing is done by Sarah Downs and Phil Felix.

EISNER: What do you mean by polishing?

KURTZMAN: Well, Will renders the coloring up to a rough point. He leaves much to be finished, so Sarah and Phil do the finish-ing and polishing.

EISNER: So they'll put in a highlight, feather in a highlight?



Kurtzman panel from "Jivaro Death" in Two-Fisted Tales No. 19 (1950).

KURTZMAN: There's no such thing as feathering in my [laughter]

EISNER: I'm sorry . . . I didn't mean Eisner-type feathering! [laughter]

KURTZMAN: We blend, smooth, tone . . . we intensify. Feathering, you see, is a black & white cartoonist's device. It has nothing to do with . . .

EISNER: I meant modeling.

KURTZMAN: The reason I'm grabbing on to this is that you're the feathering master as well as the composition master. Feathering is a shorthand for a changing tone. Instead of making an actual gradation of tone, you paint in pure black, a series of parallel pointed strokes that suggest gradation. But, that isn't actually the way it is in nature. When we leave the comic book technique of feathering and we try to render in illustrator's colors there is no such thing as feathering. When an artist is trained in black and white feathering technique, it is a struggle to switch to color. I've watched your work and I've seen the struggle.

EISNER: You said it . . . whew!!

KURTZMAN: The struggle is to get away from the black line and the feather. And it takes a while because you've been conditioned to think that your black line and your feathering is the only way. You find that your hand's are being held in a vise-like grip of the comic book technique. You overload with black because you try to solve all problems with black.

EISNER: I agree with you and I'll add a confession of my own. The last three or four years is really the first time I have worked seriously at full color. It has really been a struggle. I feel like someone just emerging from underneath a rock. I'm terrified at times when I find myself out beyond the nice warm comfortable black line. The minute I go too far, I go scurrying back and feather like mad. Color is very difficult to get into after so many years of working with only black and white! You really seem to have a handle on it. Let's talk about the general approach to the whole technique. You're working here primarily with pencils, you're not inking, you're not concerned with finishes at this stage. With Annie Fanny, no, of course not because someone else is doing that and you're supervising. But what about something coming out under your own name, purely yours?

KURTZMAN: Well, just about nothing comes out with my finish.

EISNER: All right, unless you want to develop that point further let's move on to another subject. How do you see the comic artist himself? I know you and I have very similar opinions but there are things you might have to say about the technique of sequential art. For example, I think in terms of the total story, that is, the words and the pictures are a unity. There is no real clear demarcation. I've been trying to make formulas for it, but it still is visceral for me. I find it very difficult, for instance, to work



Photo by E.B. Boatner

from somebody else's script. In fact, I find it almost impossible! I look on the combination of the two as a story telling device within itself. It seems to me I have just barely touched the potential possible with this technique. . . . with pictures and words in a series of boxes. Things I, and others, have yet to undertake. What I would like to hear from you is what do you feel are the perimeters of this medium?

KURTZMAN: I don't have an answer for that because I think the perimeters or parameters are wherever your talent will take you. For instance, your talent is vaguely akin to mine. We both write and we both draw. You are a very "good" writer. Writing is a talent that can be independent of the drawing. A writer works with the abstract word.

EISNER: Let me interrupt you and interject my own thoughts and then you can take off on it. I see my art work and the words too, as being in service to the idea itself. I'm like a musician preparing an orchestration trying to find a balance of elements. I would bear down (in some places) on the drawing or mute it in others in favor of the words almost like an orchestra leader . . . for instance. Do you think in those terms?

KURTZMAN: Not quite. I think probably I'm a little foreign to your way of thinking in that I'm always trying to break out of the format that you seem quite comfortable with. You've got your typewriter and your bottle of ink and that's it. Probably because I'm not as good at it as you, I tend to take the medium outside of the limitations of the bottle of India ink and the words, and I look to other horizons . . . photographs, color, fast drawing as well as slow . . . the noodle technique as opposed to the impression.

EISNER: Then you would be equally comfortable and feel that you were working within the frame of your own medium or media if you were working with a photographer. A camera, as far as you're concerned, is part of what you would like to work with or what you feel you can work with, right?

KURTZMAN: Yes, yes . . .

EISNER: In the case of a camera you would make the highly detailed, as you said, sketches . . .?

KURTZMAN: Storyboard. Working with a photographer, he'd usually have his hand on the shutter and I'd have my hand on his throat.

EISNER: Well, *that's* a different concept. I shouldn't really interject myself but since you keep referring to me, not at all defensively but rather agreeing with you, I have to say that yes, I'm staying with the medium as a literary form for now. At least at this point in my career. Who knows where it'll take me?

KURTZMAN: You've recently moved into painting.

EISNER: Yes, and that's only tentatively but as I gain strength ultimately and learn more about it I will probably move more freely in that direction.

KURTZMAN: You should because part of what's happening is with the strides in printing, color is more available now than ever before. And the audience wants color. They want 1982.

EISNER: Have you consciously thought ever that there was a "science" to this art? Do you think you have a set of unspoken concepts or systems?

KURTZMAN: We all have systems. Everything is systemitized in the computer of the brain.

EISNER: I know we teach at the same school. Do you give them a kind of set of test rules or criterion?

KURTZMAN: Well, I try to pass along my systems. That is exactly what I do.

EISNER: All right, give me an example of one of the systems you pass along.

KURTZMAN: Color. I've taught my color system to the class and in a sense it's very advanced. I should be teaching my color system to professionals.

EISNER: I feel the same.

KURTZMAN: Good color work . . . good colorists are hard to come by. It's very difficult to get people who know how to work with color for Little Annie Fanny. In any case, I have a color system. Do you want me to run through it here?

EISNER: Well, a sampling of it. I think it would be interesting.

KURTZMAN: The black and white cartoonist works backwards or I should say I work backwards to the way he works. A cartoonist tends to lean heavily on his black. So when he works with color, he starts with black and then fills color in. He does that because of traditional printing techniques. Nevertheless, he gives unfair attention to black. When we work with color on Annie Fanny black is last thing we put in. You start with a system of harmonies or harmonics, like music. Color is like music. You try to create a family of harmonious colors that look good together. It's very difficult to create harmonies of color if you don't have



Kurtzman's pencil rough of Little Annie Fanny panel from June 1968 Playboy.

a system. My system is to start off with a foundation color, usually yellow.

EISNER: You're talking about Little Annie Fanny?

KURTZMAN: Yes... because we want the painting to be warm. Yellow is the warmest primary color. Next, we put literal color down... the sky is blue, the grass is green. That's literal color. But before color can be applied, we have to make a black and white sketch. This is very important. You establish your tones before you establish your color.

EISNER: Explain what you mean by tones because I'm not sure what you mean.

KURTZMAN: It's shading. Here is what's dark. Here is what's light. Once you have established your tone then you can establish your color because you know what has to be dark color and you know what has to be light color.

EISNER: What you're doing then is composing the picture in black and white and giving values to each element of it.

KURTZMAN: Yes. I don't want this to sound complicated. If you don't establish clarity with tones you run the risk of getting into a checkerboard of color, which can camouflage your picture out of existence. So after planning your tones you go to color. You lay down a foundation yellow or you might lay down a blue if you want a cold composition. If you want a hot composition you might lay down a yellow or

ange. You put down your dominating color. Now the reason you do that... let's say you start with a yellow, everything you lay down on top of that is going to have a hint of foundation yellow. It creates a harmony of common color like a house of relatives. It's when colors aren't related that you have your clash...

EISNER: Cacophony!

KURTZMAN: ... the color combos that set your teeth on edge.

EISNER: There's a German word for that called *grell*. Like, say, blue and purple and orange all of equal intensity are right along side one another.

KURTZMAN: Right on! And even more so with opposite primaries and secondaries. Red and green, I mean "real" primary red and secondary green don't harmonize but if you make it a yellow red, that is, a fire engine red, it harmonizes with the yellow in the green and you've got Christmas. You make related colors by giving them a common color foundation. Back to our system... over our yellow we lay down our literal colors, blue for sky, etc., and then we turn to our tone sketch and we take a single toning "agent," a color that is dark... browns, blues, deep maroons... we use that as a shadowing agent. And we shadow everything... sky, grass, rocks, everything with the same agent. Incidentally, the water color we use (Grumbacher) is transparent. You can see the first color foundation we laid down through the second color. Our final color step is we go to our black and white extremes and touch up our painting with the extremes. That's the way we paint.

EISNER: I'm awed sitting here because I never really had a "studio" discussion with you on color on this level. I hadn't realized before how much emphasis you placed on color and how deeply involved you are in it; how you understand it. Let's move on to something broader as far as the art form itself. We've talked about how you work, what your thoughts are concerning color. I want to stay not so much with broad philosophy, but more importantly with the working technique. I guess since you're not involved in finishing work a lot, you're not concerned with tools such as no. 2 or no. 3 sable brushes or...

KURTZMAN: Well, I'll tell you, I'm constantly amazed and perplexed at the dominance of Windsor-Newton sable brushes. Something has got to be done! How long is this monopoly going to go on? They're the only ones that work!

EISNER: I have eighteen Windsor-Newton brushes in the shop that must be twenty years old and I have what must be another fourteen Japanese brushes bought during the Eisner-Iger days for 4 cents each which I still use on occasion.

KURTZMAN: Really?

EISNER: Have you ever used a Japanese brush?

KURTZMAN: I tried to; it's very different.

EISNER: It's very hard to use, there's no



Finished version of same panel, with Will Elder and Jack Davis providing final polished art.

resilience!

KURTZMAN: Well as I understand it, we owe all of our long suffering with brushes to you. You're the one who popularized the brush. You and Lou Fine.

EISNER: Well, Lou Fine and I were the only ones in my first studio who could use the Japanese brush. I picked up the Japanese brush for two reasons. First because I thought there was a relationship between Oriental art and comics and secondly I found out they were very cheap. At \$5.00 per page (in those days) the cost of tools was a big factor.

KURTZMAN: Isn't it interesting how you pre-empted the use of Quill pens? People just stopped using pens. [laughter]

EISNER: Let's turn this a little bit. This is supposed to be an interview with you, not with me.

KURTZMAN: Well, you've affected my life! I have to buy these incredibly expensive Windsor-Newton brushes. That is directly traceable to you.

EISNER: Oy!! I apologize and I tell you what. I'll give you a rebate on any Windsor-Newton brush you turn in. I'll refurbish it. I know how to clean them up. Let's talk about shop, let's talk about your own small shop. I've been in your studio and it's very small, very crowded, looks just like what a cartoon studio should look like. It's more of an atelier than it is a studio. Well... you've always worked in small space with

people outside your door somewhere.

KURTZMAN: That's because I couldn't have it the other way. If I had the money, I'd have a great big space.

EISNER: How do you deal with reference? KURTZMAN: Scrap?

EISNER: What you call scrap I call morgue or reference.

KURTZMAN: I went through days of trying to keep a file and a morgue and I became enslaved to my file and my indexes and my cross indexes.

EISNER: Were you good at keeping something like that, are you organized?

KURTZMAN: I'm organized but you can get carried away with something like that. My present system, for whatever it's worth... I subscribe to both *Time* and *Newsweek* and there's a library a few blocks away from me and when I need something I usually go to *Time* or *Newsweek* or the library which has a dandy master file. There was a time when I used to cut up the *New York Times* faithfully every day and file away the news for my war magazines. I had cross indexes that you wouldn't believe and it just drove me crazy.

EISNER: Let's talk about ideas. Do you find you don't need to talk over your ideas with anybody, when you have one? Do you prefer to move out on it on your own?

KURTZMAN: No, I'm pretty cowardly. I discuss ideas all the time. Do you?

EISNER: Well, I have a problem, I make a conscious effort not to discuss them. I have a million ideas running through my head but I find they get diluted if I discuss them. For example, if I'm going to do a story and if I tell it to somebody---it "goes away" on me, I lose it, it vaporizes, sort of. Then when I sit down to do the story I end up doing it totally differently. Do you have that experience?

KURTZMAN: I don't have millions of ideas running through my head like you do... maybe two or three.

EISNER: Well, you only have "my" word for that! [laughter]

KURTZMAN: Well, then I have millions of ideas running around in my head too. As a matter of fact, it's at the idea stage I really suffer. But then again it all has to do with what kind of theme I'm working on. If I'm working on Little Annie Fanny I find it very difficult and I think it's basically because Annie Fanny is not the best feature for me to be working on. It's worked out very well in that everyone all over the world seems to be familiar with Little Annie Fanny, but it's not the kind of a format where ideas come thick and fast so I always open up the story board for everyone and anyone who will care to give ideas. After my story-board is laid down and everything is very visible, I love to get suggestions.

EISNER: Let's go back to the fact that Annie Fanny's story line is contradictory and not within a totality that is satisfying to you...or is it the nature of the subject?

KURTZMAN: The format is contradictory. It is a combination of fantasy and reality that clashes in my own mind. The fact of Annie Fanny being what she is makes it hard for something satirical to happen to her. To make her sexy and at the same time a satirical vehicle puts me at cross purposes.

EISNER: Alright let's go on then and talk about sequential art as an art form and where it's going and where we see it, particularly with what we've seen it develop from and into during our working careers. Now you're maybe a few years younger than I but not a whole hell of a lot in working time.

KURTZMAN: In working time next to Will Eisner I feel I've been around for fifteen minutes.

EISNER: Well that's only because I look worried. I worry a lot. [laughter] But I'm getting at something that you and I have often commented on... that you and I seem to have discovered the European scene, particularly the French scene very early. I sometimes think we discovered it before anyone else did. [laughter]

KURTZMAN: Well I discovered it through a very good friend of mine, Rene Goscinny.

EISNER: Who's now dead.

KURTZMAN: Right... who rented space in my studio in New York from 1949-1950 and was starving and failing before he went



Rene Goscinny's most famous creation, Asterix.

back to France and became a millionaire.

EISNER: He created Asterix with what's the artist's name? He was a writer wasn't he, Goscinny? Uderzo!!... that's the artist right?

KURTZMAN: Well Rene was a would-be artist. He could draw, his drawings just weren't very good. Nevertheless, his ability gave him the visual insight that is so important to being a good... what's your word?

EISNER: I use sequential artist but that's not broad enough... unless you accept my definition that the ultimate sequential artist should be both.

KURTZMAN: Alright, sequential artist. He was a good sequential artist because he had the pictures and the words in his head.

EISNER: I guess we want to talk about where we think the art form came from and where we think it's going

KURTZMAN: Where it's going... OK, I

think this has always been very important to me. The French cartoonists have been very important, especially in the last fifteen years, because for whatever reason, they broke into the open running with their cartoon art. You know we always pride ourselves in America as being a free society where we have the liberty to try things and we excel because of the freedom we traditionally have. In cartooning the French suddenly were given the opportunity to experiment and do whatever they wanted to... to climb as high as they could.

EISNER: I don't totally agree with your estimate of the cause. I agree with the result!

KURTZMAN: I don't know the cause.

EISNER: Well, what I quarrel with, Harv, is when you say they were "given" the freedom. I hear that term all over. I'm sure you hear it too, in Europe particularly! Hell, who gives them the freedom, and who denies us that freedom here?

KURTZMAN: You're personalizing it too much and I don't think you're going to understand what I'm saying if you do personalize it. You have to think of it in the terms of mechanical events... distribution systems... printing systems... it wasn't just a person who gave them the freedom, it was a format, the format of a type of magazine. *Pilote* magazine is the only one I remember. I understand there were some other magazines but *Pilote* magazine said, "Here's a white-coated stock--"

EISNER: Oh Harv! But *Pilote* magazine came along after a couple of undergrounds had already started in France. I think Moliterni had started with an underground magazine before he came to Dargaud. I'll agree with what you're saying if you change...

KURTZMAN: Are you sure?

EISNER: That's the way I understand it. I think I'm right.

KURTZMAN: Well *Pilote* was the first thin thing that I saw...

EISNER: If you're talking about a climate Harvey, that's something else again. The climate in Europe, in France particularly, was well established. There's a long history of the cartoonist's position in the French culture. There was a literary market for the cartoonist, the satirical cartoonist or even the sequential artist in Europe since the Middle Ages... at least.

KURTZMAN: I tried to express the fact that I couldn't neatly put forth the causes because I know relatively little about the causes and I've gotten enough clues to know causes were "there."

EISNER: Well let's agree at least that there was a freedom.

KURTZMAN: There "was" a freedom. Maybe it was the climate. To me the freedom existed in magazine formats where cartoonists were allowed to carry their craft in directions that were diverse and multiple compared to what was happening here. They were given a stage to work on that was very expensive by our standards. They were given good papers, good printing and the

opportunity to diversify. I can't think of any similar opportunity here at that particular time, can you?

EISNER: Well, not quite. But there was the opportunity here. Maybe what we can agree on is that there were more publishers in France at that time willing to undertake new publications there by opening up a wider, freer market for experimental stuff. Whereas here in this country publishers or publishers of sequential art confined themselves to newspaper and ten-cent saddle-stitch magazines...

KURTZMAN: Exactment! Now what happened is, artists given the freedom are capable of all kinds of surprising things. And given the freedom in Europe they started producing work on such a high level of craft that they attracted still more talent into the fold and you had people developing like Moebius, Bretecher, Gotlib...

EISNER: Druillet.

KURTZMAN: There's a whole list of incredible cartoonists. Talented to the point where you feel like saying, "This is Art." I don't know what the definition of Art is. All I know is that artistic freedom in France seems to be bringing cartoon art out of the French society that is vastly superior to any other society that I'm aware of. And I think that the horizons are limitless in our society too. You asked me originally the future of cartooning, how artistic cartooning can be. I think the artists here, given proper freedom, can develop all kinds of remarkable works. Witness France.

EISNER: I have no argument with that. Yes!! I think the art and talented people exists both places. I think the market place has a lot to do with it.

KURTZMAN: Yes... the market place has to be there. And leadership has to be there.

EISNER: OK, I'll agree that there is a difference between the French and American material. I agree with you the French material is incredibly good on the whole. It'd be silly to single out one artist and measure him against any single American or single Spanish artist. Are you creating a separation between the story and the art or is it a total combination of the two? I'm talking about art as draftsmanship. We talk about art but very often people like you and I who are story or text oriented call the sum of the two as a great piece of art. Both of us, perhaps more than most, are wedded to the philosophy that there is no real wall between story, concept, and art. Whereas in the case of the Spanish scene, let's say, many seem to regard art as superior in importance. I have often heard them say, "Well, somebody gave me a story and I did the art." They then begin to compare art against art and they feel actually fair doing that. Do you agree with that idea? Are you talking about "art" or are you talking about the totality of concept, the intellectual concept?

KURTZMAN: I think cartooning consists of the two elements... graphics and text. There's no doubt that the two coexist and

very often one does exist without the other. You can have poor text and good art, etc. Obviously it is to the advantage of the total product to have good text and good art and the more closely integrated the good text and good art is, the greater the opportunity is to create the capital A Art.

EISNER: All right, now the French artists you were talking about a minute ago, are they great within that totality called art?

KURTZMAN: I have a very simple cop-out here. I don't speak French.

EISNER: Neither do I although I can appreciate Lausier even though I can't tell what in the heck he's saying but I love to look at his stuff.

KURTZMAN: Yes, but I would pass on judging on their writing because I don't know French

EISNER: Yes, but see that's exactly my point. Suppose they did a pantomime and then there's no "writing" so to speak, but

there is still "writing"... I guess what we're struggling with here is a definition! Oh, well, I guess I'm splitting hairs. I agree with you that the scene in France from the first day I got there in 1958, 59 was very, very exciting. It was a heady climate. The stuff that's being done today is interesting, still exciting and really very challenging. I know I feel challenged and I'm sure you do to.

KURTZMAN: Before we forget there is the other side of the French work that you may or may not be aware of. I've constantly been in touch with the *Charlie Hebdo* people, the *Charlie* people whose artwork... the graphics that they do are outrageously crude and they're very much involved with ideas, text.

EISNER: Ideas?

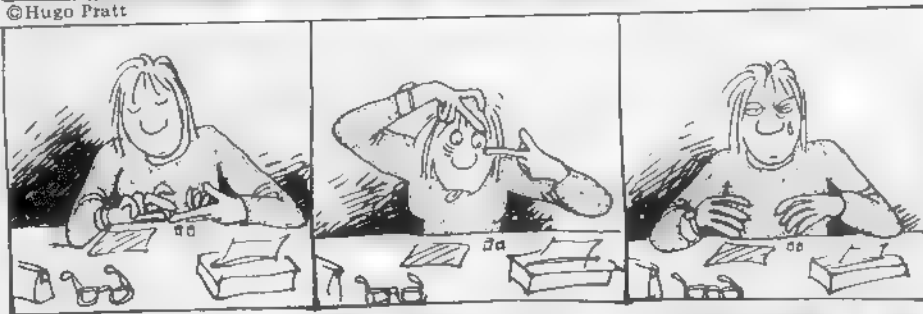
KURTZMAN: Well with words. They're much more involved with words.

EISNER: Let me pursue it and argue with you. I think it was the ideas that made the



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Three European cartoonists mentioned in the dialogue (top) Hugo Pratt (middle) Claire Bretecher (bottom) Moebius



© 1978 Claire Bretecher



© 1975 Moebius

French market, the French scene so exciting. Not necessarily the pictures or the words but the ideas. Now whatever created the ideas or allowed them to explore such ideas . .

KURTZMAN: I see it in another way. I think societies are capable of reaching great heights if circumstances are right. In trying to understand or trying to reach the causative factor, isn't that what we're trying to do? What made this all happen? I reach back, and of course the ideas made it all happen but what put the ideas there? Like with the more important world events, the pattern is the same . . . for events to happen you need climate and leadership to exploit the climate. OK, enough, already. The execution of the ideas is related to the freedom you talk about.

EISNER: Do you feel that you, Harvey Kurtzman, are behind the mainstream, that working here you're not keeping up competitively with the French scene?

KURTZMAN: Absolutely! What's intriguing about the French is that they're selling comics continuities in *book* shops! They've got this system . . .

EISNER: Oh come on Harvey, it's not the system, it's not the book shops, it's what's being done. I don't feel that I'm behind them. Sure, I feel the "lack" of broad popular acceptance. But it is growing here. I feel it.

KURTZMAN: Let me try and explain what I mean by the system. I think we have a word problem here. I'm not talking about the system like democracy or socialism. The kind of system I'm talking about is a distribution system, a comic book system, a syndicate cartoon system. A young cartoonist has several directions he can take when he gets out of school, in the U.S. He can do a comic strip like Beetle Bailey, and make a lot of money. He can devote himself to comic books and try to become the best Superman or Silver Surfer artist or whatever the hell . . .

KURTZMAN: Or he can devote the rest of his life doing Cobean-style gag cartoons for the *New Yorker*. But there is hope. Things are beginning to open up --I won't mention where because I want to make my argument simple. These are the systems we have to work with here. That's the way it is. I don't know why. I can speculate as you can. In France, they've got different systems. They are not into syndicate cartoons. They're not into *New Yorker* cartoons. They're not into *Superman* comics.

EISNER: Well what are their outlets? Five magazines which are sort of ground level, not underground, but ground level it you will. OK, maybe six: *Charlie*, *L'Echo Des Savanes*, *Metal Hurlant*, *Pilote* . . .

KURTZMAN: *Illustration* is another.

EISNER: I don't know that one. There's a couple of them and there's a number of small French publishing houses. But we have them here. We don't have perhaps as many of them but there's maybe four or five.

KURTZMAN: But it's another system.

EISNER: What do you mean? Another system of distribution, of marketing or a system of accepting their work?

KURTZMAN: Yes, all of that. The titles you just mentioned, that's their system . . . the way they've developed homegrown cartoonists in *Metal Hurlant*, in *Pilote*, in *Charlie* . . . the system that pays an artist when he appears in a magazine and pays him again when the same work is almost immediately reprinted as a book.

EISNER: And you say they're growing so rapidly or they're so far ahead of us? You're saying the artists are growing so rapidly intellectually and so far advanced or avant garde, as they say, because they have this outlet that cartoonists in this country do not have?

KURTZMAN: Don't "seem" to have...

EISNER: Well I don't agree with that entirely but okay, take it. You've got the floor.

KURTZMAN: That doesn't take into account the whole world of Peanuts or Gary Trudeau . . .

EISNER: I'll agree with you the syndicate world, Lord knows, is a pretty closed world because only a very few new newspaper cartoon strips are born a year, of which most soon die. And the experimentation of any one of those strips, with rare exceptions, is limited. Not only that, but once they get started they're frozen into a mold and never advance. So we're in agreement there. I guess what I'm trying to make a case for is the fact that "the physical system" as you call it is virtually the same here as it is there and what is different, is that their experimental, intellectual content, or scope is more adult, more progressive, more advanced than what we have here. Also, I should add that comic book artists seem to have a higher status in the cultural community. That, I perceive as the difference.

KURTZMAN: Well to me an essential part of the difference is when a guy with talent grows up in France, he would, because of that peculiar system be encouraged to go into the cartoon business. Whereas because of what's happening in this country the same guy would choose advertising or television. I don't think anybody with a really sensitive talent wants to get into comic books over here any more.

EISNER: Well I think we've beat that to death. Let's say in conclusion that the French scene is very exciting and as far as you're concerned --and I agree-- that they have the lead; that's where it's going! Now we can talk about where the whole scene's going. Wouldn't you agree with me that cartoonists are more international. Artists involved in sequential art are more international in their outlook. Their opportunity is more international. Many American cartoonists are now being syndicated in Europe and Europeans are being used in America today.

KURTZMAN: Well, you know more about that than I do. I've suspected but I haven't

been able to say . . . and you've become one of the Internationalists.

EISNER: Well all you have to do is look at the work that's coming in from Europe that you and I get in the mail to see that a lot of Americans are beginning to appear there and a lot of Europeans are appearing here.

KURTZMAN: Well that was always my hope for the future that they would develop syndication on that level, circumventing the old syndicate system.

EISNER: A number of artists are doing that themselves. Hugo Pratt! He handles his own stuff. You know Hugo don't you? Neal Adams is doing it.

KURTZMAN: I don't know Pratt.

EISNER: Oh, he's a wonderful guy. The next time he comes to New York I want you to meet him.

KURTZMAN: He likes the United States?

EISNER: Yeah, he loves the States. I just saw him in Barcelona. A funny story about him was told to me, not by Hugo but by somebody else. Stan Lee offered him once, in Europe, a chance to come to America and work for Marvel Comics. He thought Hugo was fabulous. And Hugo stood there, his arms akimbo, and said, "Yes, Stan. So what are you going to pay me?" He speaks English with a very tough Italian accent. And Stan said, "Well, since you're so good, we'll pay you more than we normally pay. We can pay you \$100 a page!" Hugo cocked his head and said, "I'll tell you what, Mr. Lee. I'll give you \$150 per page. You come to Italy and work for me!" [laughter] I don't know if it is a true story or not, but even if it's apocryphal, it sounds like Hugo! Let's close this up because, as usual, we go on forever. In the subject of where the field is going, let's talk about where Harvey Kurtzman wants to go in the next ten years, or where you are hoping to go?

KURTZMAN: I was hoping you'd tell me. [laughter] Well, I don't believe in looking into the crystal ball...

EISNER: Well, where would you like to go?

KURTZMAN: I'd like to get into this new wave of French type publishing. I think that is the most exciting thing, as we've said again and again. It's the most logical way for cartooning to go. I don't want to stay with old forms. I don't want to go into comic books or syndicated cartoons. So, I'm thinking a lot about magazines.

EISNER: You're thinking about format, not necessarily the content you'll produce as you go along. Is that what you're thinking?

KURTZMAN: Yes...

EISNER: Well, Harv, it's been good having dissent together here.

KURTZMAN: I'm not too sure what we disagreed on. [laughter]

EISNER: Okay, so we'll end the discussion just like we always do, with a great promise that we're going to do something together one of these days.

KURTZMAN: Again, total agreement.

EISNER: Okay. And thank you.

WHO IS "OMAHA?"

... AND WHO IS "CHARLIE?"



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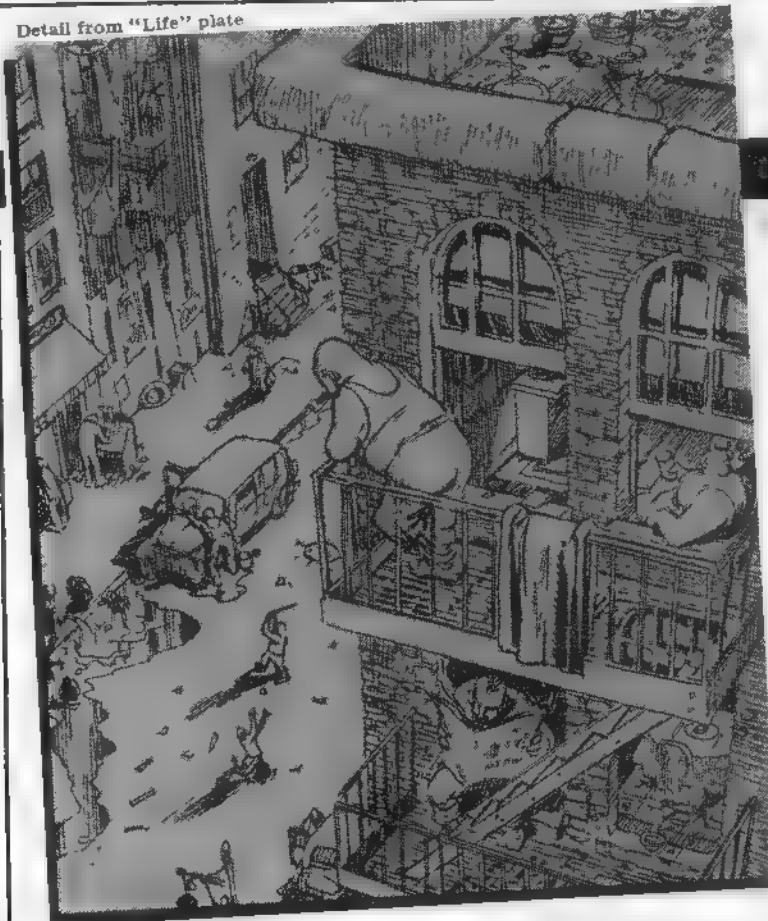
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Detail from "Life" plate



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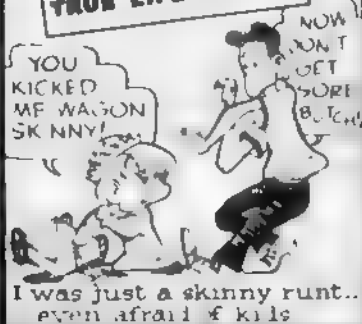
THE SPIRIT

**ACTION
Mystery
ADVENTURE**

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED JANUARY 18, 1948

JUST ONE WORD MADE ME A MAN!

**READ THIS
TRUE LIFE STORY**



Why I couldn't even lift my girl's books so I could carry 'em home from school.



Then one day I read CHARLIE HORSE'S course on body building.



And after only 15 minutes a day.



NOW

LET ME MAKE A MAN OF YOU IN ONLY 15 MINUTES A DAY

**THIS IS
THE STRONGEST,
TOUGHEST MAN
IN THE WHOLE
WORLD**



Are you pushed around by kids half your size? Do people laugh when you go swimming? **Don't be a SHNOOK!**

I know how it feels to be a weak little twerp. Yes, when I was 15 years old I was so weak I couldn't even snap the thread tied around my lunch box. Well, I did something about it...

"The Secret"

The real secret is "flexing" Yes, I discovered that by... but you'd better read for yourself my 125 584 page booklet. **FREE.**

So why wait? **Write now!** By using my secret flexing exercise I can make you so even you'll be amazed. I don't care if you are 94 years old, with rickets, anemia, and lumbago. As long as you can sit, scratch your head, I can make a man of you.

Do it now!

Don't let the other guy who read this advertisement get the drop on you. Make sure it's **you** who does the beating of all the other weak, heap of little kids, y or back!



**THE
SPIRIT**

BY **Will Eisner**



15 MINUTES A DAY
IN 100 DAYS... BUT
SUPPOSE AH TRAIN
FO' A WHOLE
HOUR PER DAY...
HMMMM...



YASSUH...
AND AT THE
RATE O' TWO
HOURS A DAY...
AH CAN BE
A MAN IN ONE
WEEK!

...AAHHH YES.. AS MR CHARLIE
HORSE SAYS... AND WE QUOTE
FROM H'S ADVERTISING:

What red-blooded young
man wouldn't thrill to
new-found strength?

to know you are a
fine specimen of manhood
will make you master of
your fate

no challenge will go unanswered... and the
things you will undertake will amaze you.

BUYIN' MAH
GAL SODAS, HEY?
WHY Y'LIL PUNK,
I'LL BEAT YO'
EARS SO FLAT,
YO' HAT'LL SIT
ON YO' SHOULDERS!

AH'LL ASSEPT THAT
CHALLENGE,
SON.. JES ONE
WEEK FUM
T'DAY..!

SHRIMPS
CAN'T JOIN
DIS CLUB..
BEAT IT,
EBONY!

NEXT
WEEK
AH'LL JOIN..
AH'LL SEE
YO' THEN,
BULLY!

A.C.



HMMMM... MAH
SCHEDULE IS
CROWDED... BUT
AH C'N FIT YO'
IN... NEX' WEEK..



..HMM... HOW
ABOUT JUST USING
ONE LEG OF MY
TRUNKS, EBONY...?
-CHUCKLE-

THIS AINT NO TIME
FO' LAFFIN', MIST'
SPIRIT... PLEASE GET
GOIN' WIF THAT
NEEDLE.. AH GOTTA
START TRAININ'!

MEANWHILE



BUSINESS IS
AWFUL... AND THERE
HE GITS, READIN'
COMIC BOOKS!
DROPPER... THERE'S
A GUY TO SEE
YOU!

YES,
MOLL
M'DEAR...
HMMMM...
ONLY 15
MINUTES
A DAY...



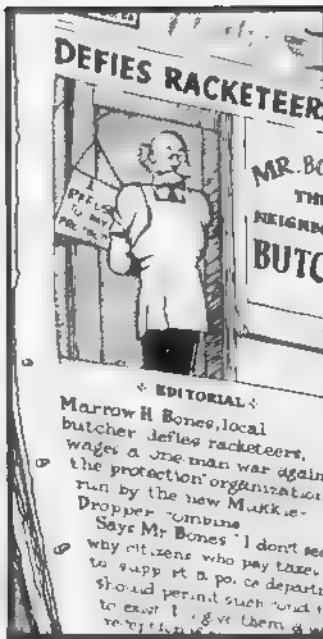
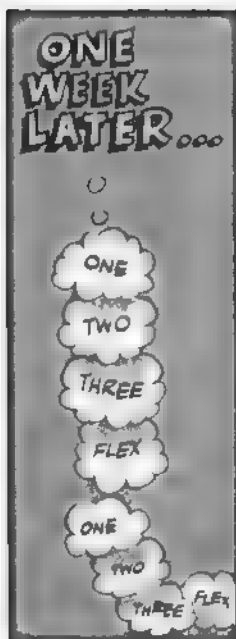
AND SO.. AS IT MUST TO ALL CROOKS.

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

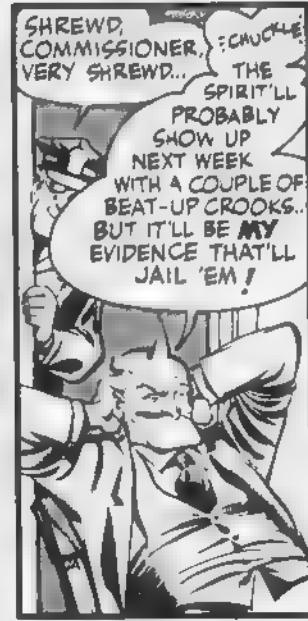
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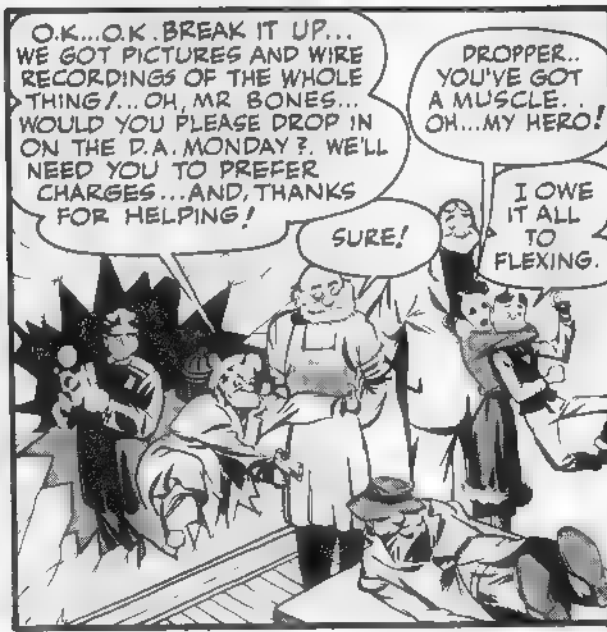
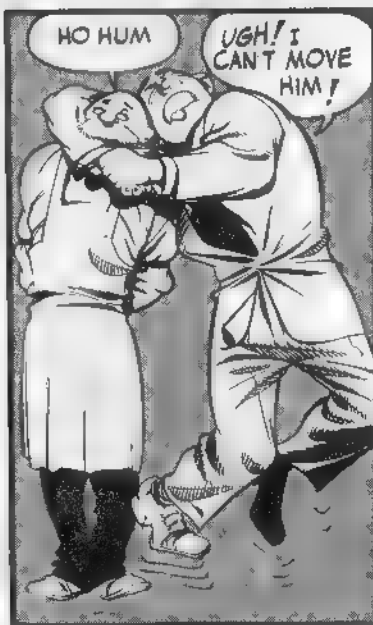
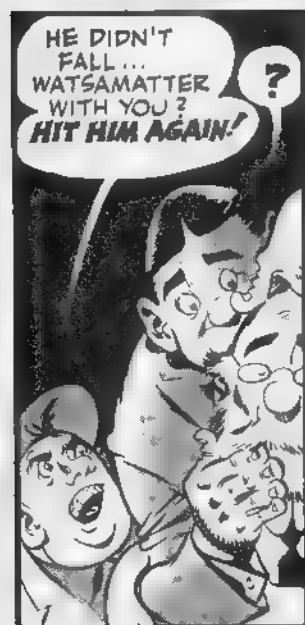
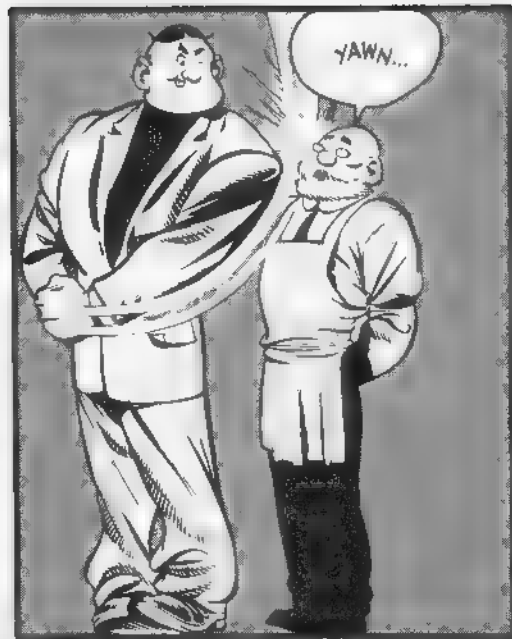
IN CONFERE

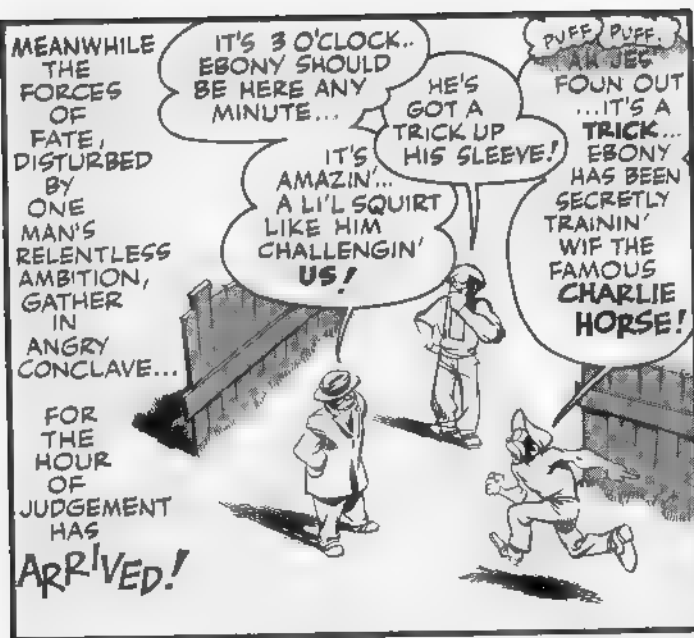




MEANWHILE, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS..







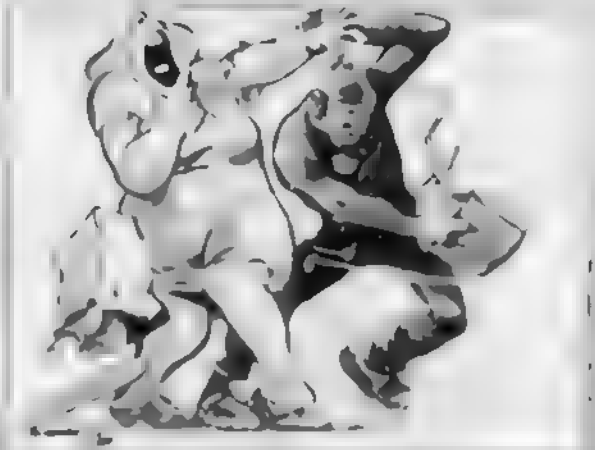


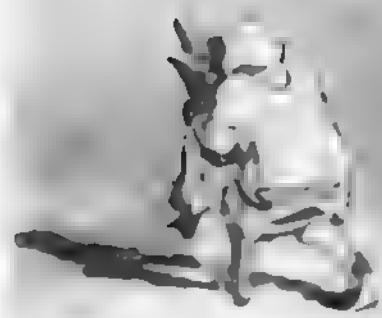
STOOPS

BLEACHERS IN A STADIUM
ARE THE TENEMENT STOOPS
A CROWDBRIDGE, A COMMON, A STAGELET TOO
SAME SEATS IN THE ARENA OF THE CITY
FROM WHICH TO WATCH
THE PARADE OF LIFE



WITNESSES



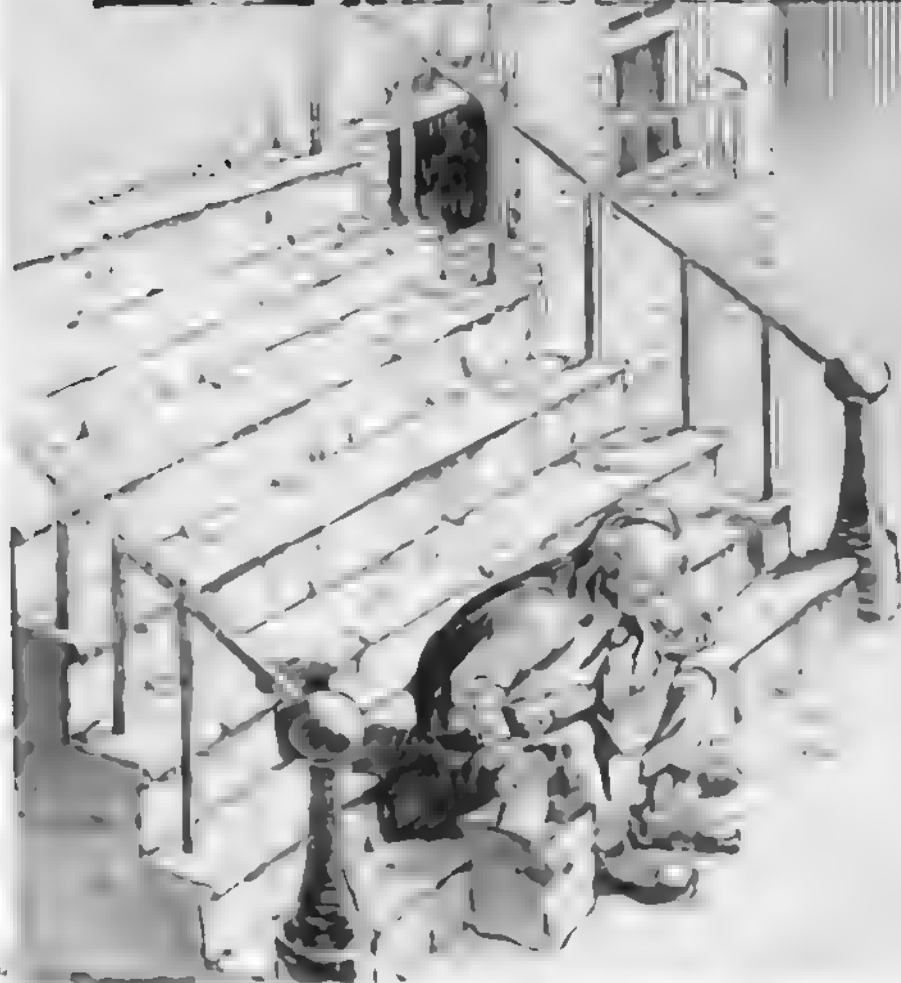
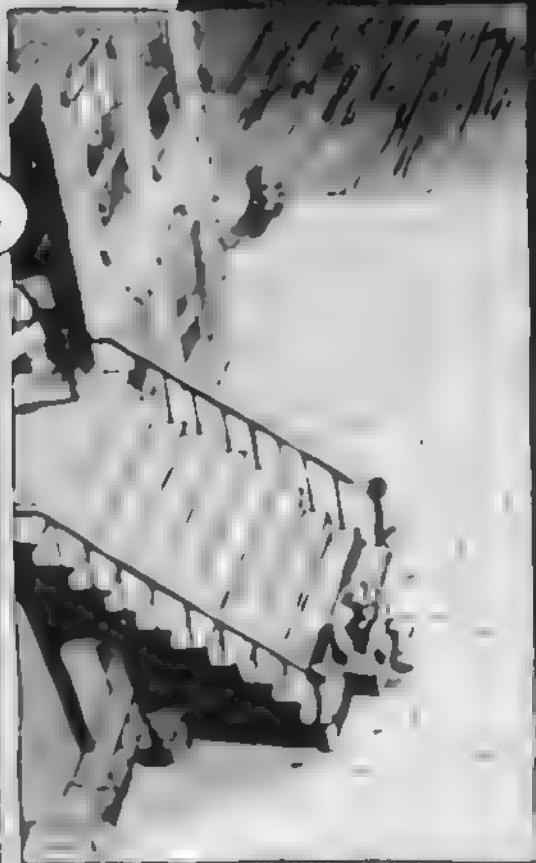






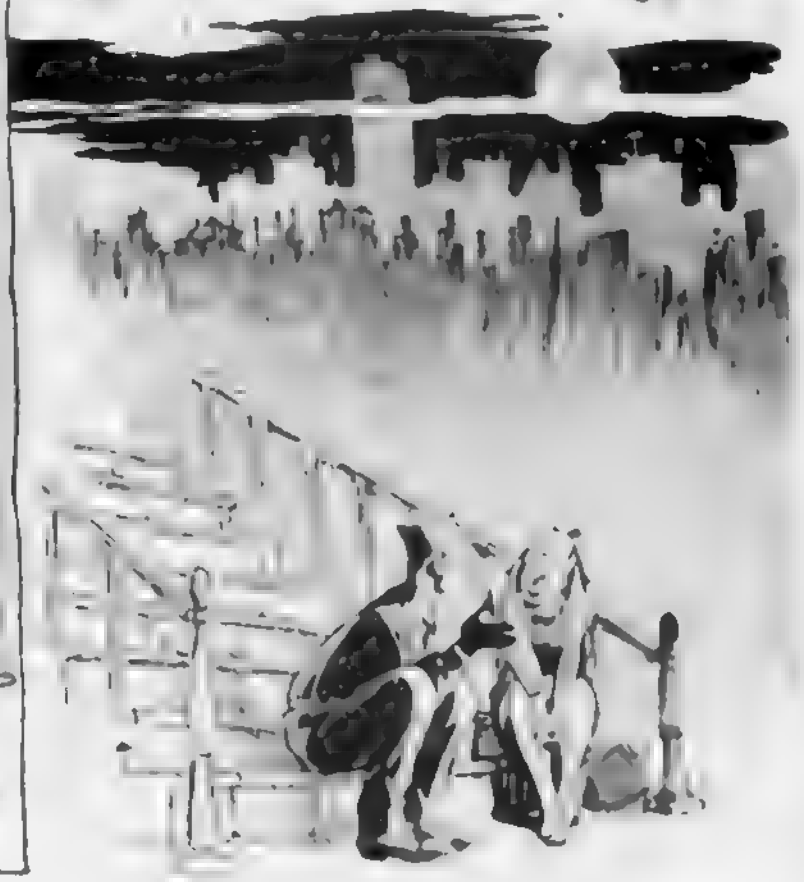
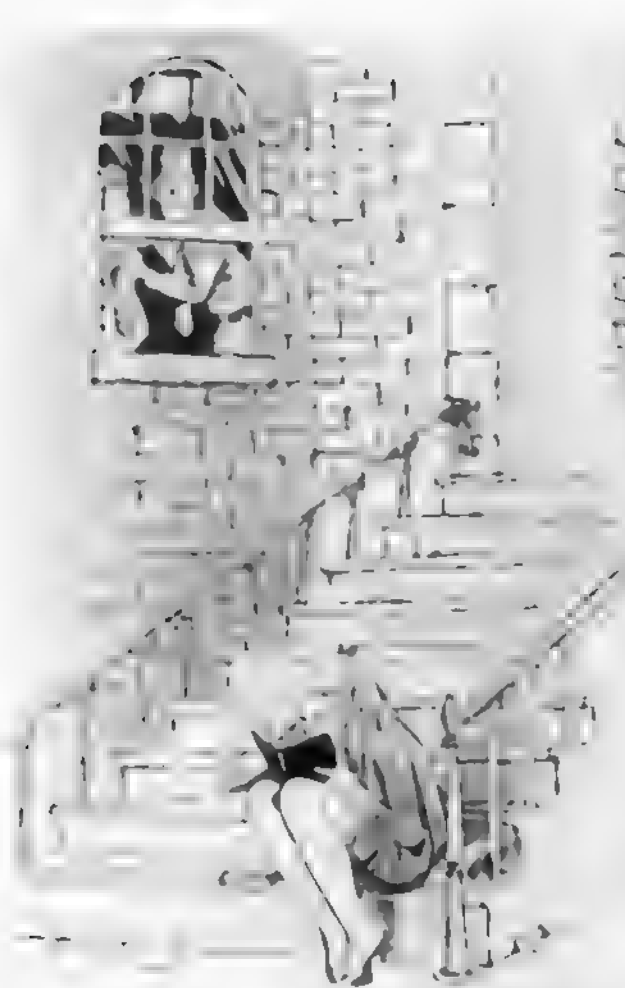
COME ON
UP ALREADY
IT'S GETTING COLD!

YEAH
I'M COMIN'
IN "





HOME



STOOPBALL

"SO, NOW, FOLKS...
WE'RE AT THE BOTTOM OF
THE NINTH... 'SCORE IS TIED
SEVEN-ALL... THIS GOTTA
BE IT!!' THE FIELDRS' ARE
INCHIN' A BIT TO RIGHT
FIELD... A TWO-BAGGER
CAN DO IT WITH A RUNNER
ON FIRST..."

"THE PITCHER
IS CASIN' THE
OUTFIELD!
ITS ALL
RIDING
ON
THIS.
HE'S
COOL

"THERE'S
THE
WINDUP
THE
RIGHT
FIELD
IS IN
MOTION
THEY'RE
READIN'
HIM..."

HE
BURNS
IT
IN!!

"ITS
AWAY
YEEHOO

"ITS
A HIT
ITS
A HIT..."

"A TWO-BASE
HIT... A-A-AND
ITS STILL GOIN'..."

"...GOIN' GOIN'... GONE
RIGHT OUTTA THE
PARK... AAAAND
THAT'S IT..."



The BARBER



THAT WAS QUITE A DAY...
REMEMBER IT?

HOLD STILL,
MISTER, **THAT'S**
IT! YOU AND
YOUR WIFE!

Y'HEAR HIM, JENNY? HE CALLED YOU MY WIFE!...MAYBE IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS FROM NOW, WHEN I'M MAKING A LOT OF MONEY...MAYBE THEN YOU **WILL BE!**

**RUDY,
DEAREST**

JOE! I HAVEN'T
SEEN YOU SINCE
WE WERE KIDS!
WHERE YA BEEN?

AWAY,
RUDY..
YEH..
AWAY!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED,
AIN'T THEY? TIME
WAS WHEN YOU AN'
THE OTHER KIDS
USETA' FOLLOW
ME AROUND! I WAS
HOT STUFF, HUH?
A **BIG** WHEEL!

THAT'S
RIGHT,
JOE!

HA HA... I USED
T'CALL YOU "STUPE!"
YOU WEREN'T TOO
BRIGHT WHEN YOU
WAS A KID! I USED
T'SWIPE EVERYTHING
YOU OWNED!

**THOSE WERE
THE DAYS,
HUH, JOE?
MEET MY
GIRL
JENNY!**

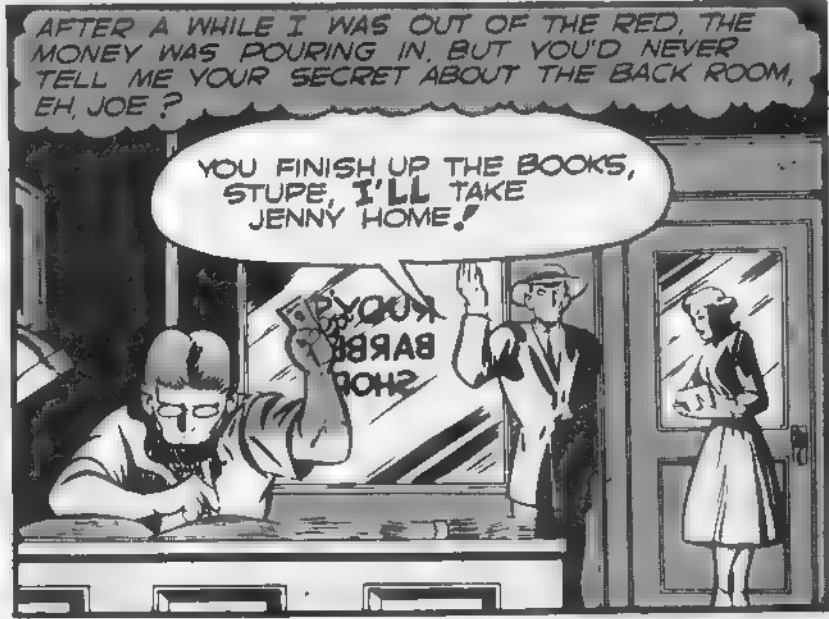
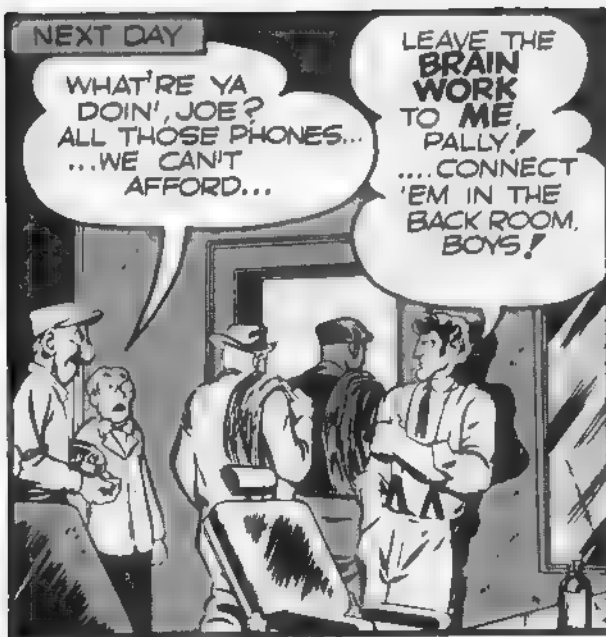
HEH HEH... YOU
AIN'T CHANGED
A BIT, HAVE
YOU, "STUPE"?

HA HA HA...
WHAD YA
MEAN,
JOE?

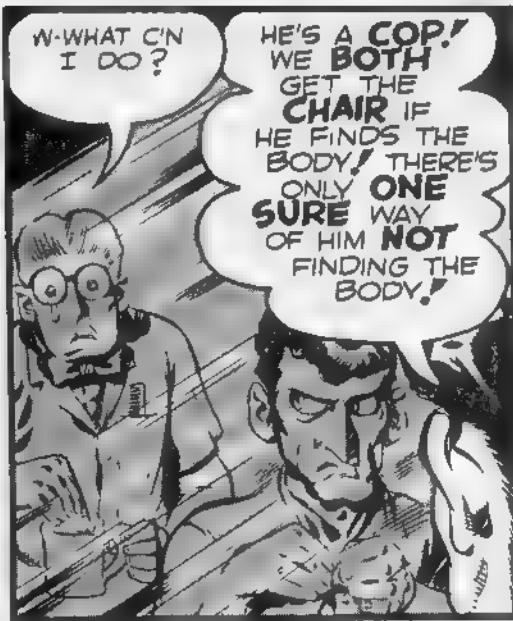
I GUESS I
WASN'T
TOO
BRIGHT.
I CERTAINLY
WASN'T
MUCH OF
A BUSINESS
MAN....
AFTER
FOUR
MONTHS,
IT LOOKED
LIKE I
WAS
READY
FOR
BANKRUPTCY.

SMART HANDLING IS WHAT
YOU NEED, STUPE!
I'M TAKIN' OVER
THIS JOINT FOR
YOU!

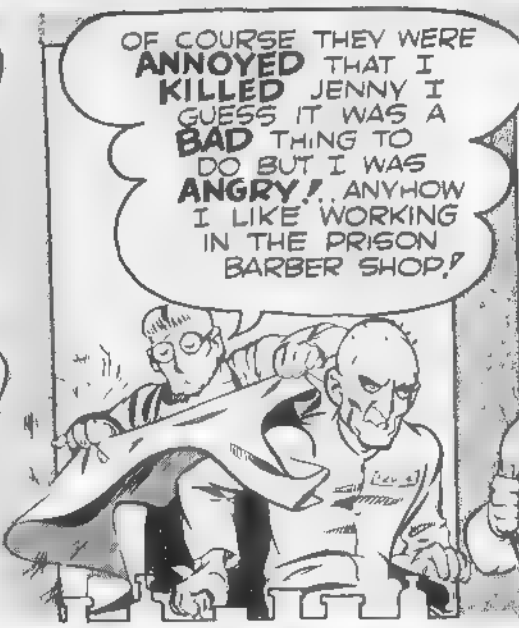
YOU
ALWAYS
WERE
A
PAL,
JOE!











LETTERS

DECADE'S PREMIERE PACKAGE?

Thanks and congratulations are certainly due everyone involved in the "jam" story [*Spirit* No.30]. It's inspired, entertaining, brilliant... truly a showcase for all those fine artists and writers and a feast for fans of theirs as well as the inimitable Eisner's! One could quibble, if one were insufferably petty, about a jarring transition here and a Kurtzman shortage there, but when all is said and done, plotted, pencilled, inked, published and read, it is clear that Kitchen Sink put together the year's--maybe even the decade's--premier, popular-priced package of primo panels.

Since most of the reprints are new to me (having discovered *The Spirit* only after the Warren issues), I have no complaints about your typical non-"jam" issues. I do hope for more original material once in a while, though, since if No.30 proves anything, it shows conclusively that Eisner collaborating with one or more other people *could* be turning out *Spirit* stories as great as they ever were.

Joe Pilati
111 E. 15th Street, New York, NY 10003

APPALLED BY GARBAGE ISSUE

I always look forward to each new issue of *The Spirit* magazine and have never been disappointed... until issue No.30. Since I'm an avid Will Eisner fan, I was appalled to see the major portion of this issue garbaged up with a "jam" story. Had I not been a subscriber, I would never have bought this issue! If I see any more issues like No.30, I might not ever buy any again!

Dave Schwartz
183 Hawthorne Ave, Apt 122, Central Islip, NY

MARVEL FAN DIGS JAM ISSUE

I don't usually buy your comic, but when I saw all the superstars listed on the cover of issue No.30, I had no choice! Byrne, Claremont, Austin... wow! I just wish you could have gotten a bigger contribution from the fantastically talented Mr. Byrne, but I guess he has a heavy workload with *The Fantastic Four*, so you had to rely mainly on lesser lights like Eisner, Corben, Caniff, etc. I can't say I'm too familiar with the work of these non-Bullpen artists. I figure these people must be big in the "underground" since you feature them so prominently. Their stuff seems OK. Maybe with some seasoning they could break into the big time. As for your title character, *The Spirit*, I have mixed feelings. I like the super-heroic background with the villains and all, but *The Spirit* does seem a bit derivative of Marvel's *Moon Knight*. Perhaps you could give *The Spirit* some powers or cut down on his supporting cast. If you can get some of those Marvel-ous artists and writers of your 30th issue to work reg-

ularly on the book (maybe get Byrne to do a cover or two) you can count on me as a reader!

Jerry Biltman
West Pine St. Comics Club
P.O. Box 1523, New York, NY 10268

KURTZMAN ON COVER? HOO-HAH?



Now of course you should know better than anyone who did what in the "jam" is... but it sure looks like the Carrion figure on the back cover is inked by Harvey Kurtzman. Well... does it?

Brian Hayes
3764 Oleander, Chicago, Illinois 60634

Brian: The credit key in the last issue is correct. Peter Poplaski inked the Carrion figure, as well as doing the pencils and color. However, there is no doubt that he was paying homage to Kurtzman's two-fisted style on that particular figure.

CONTINUE NEW SPIRIT ARTISTS

I'm dropping this note to say that I think the Jam issue was fantastic! I understand why you wouldn't want to repeat it, but how about individual 7-10 pg. new *Spirit* stories by a single artist or an artist-writer team? Artist recommendations: Al Weiss, Michael Gilbert, Steve Leialoha. I felt that these three did a particularly good job on the jam.

Robert L. Goerder Jr
902 S. Garner, State College, PA 16801

MORE JAMS! INTERVIEWS! ESSAYS!

Just read the whole 30th issue of *The Spirit*. I think the jam story was great. More! More of the same. I especially enjoyed the in-jokes about *The Spirit* and other *Spirit* stories. I counted seven *Spirit* titles hidden in the backgrounds, and I'll bet there are still more. I've never seen the "Hitler" stor-

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CLASSIFIED AD POLICY: We will run your ad absolutely FREE but please try to keep your ad under 25 words. You reserve the right to edit ads to fit. Ads will NOT be repeated automatically. Resubmit for each issue if you want your ad or portions of it rerun. Ads must be related to *The Spirit*. Send ads to: Spirit Classifieds, Box 7-8, Princeton, Wis. 54968.

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Warren Spirit No. 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 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y, but I know of it. "The Oldest Man in the World" is another classic story I've heard of but never seen. Could you reprint these? I thought I only wanted to see the postwar *Spirits* but the earlier stories are as good as any comics I've seen, so print away! I also appreciated the recent interview with Gil Kane. He's another artist I admire. More interviews please. And more comics essays too. Just don't take up too much space with these, as I buy mostly for the stories.

Ian Orenstein

22 Montrose Ave., Toronto, Canada M6J 2T7

Ian: The *Spirit* "Hitler" story hasn't been reprinted earlier because no art, negs or proofs exist in Will Eisner's files. However, we will soon "blow out" the color on an original section and run this classic story in a future issue. "The Oldest Man in the World" will appear in full color in the upcoming book **THE ART OF WILL EISNER**. Watch for a special announcement of this new book in the very next issue of *The Spirit*!



NEED NEW, NOT NAGGING

A letter from Holland to tell you how popular Will Eisner's work is over here, and to answer those fans demanding new *Spirit* stories. Nobody here has problems with liking his newest work. Nobody here is asking for new *Spirit* adventures. Ms. Brown, an English lady who received messages from the other world, once wrote a new prelude of Chopin. To those who didn't recognize the "new" Chopin and accused her of fakery Ms. Brown replied, "How could you expect someone on a higher plane to write the same

things he wrote here?" Now, I don't say Will is dead (he's not; I met him when he toured Europe last year) but his work is certainly on a higher plane. So, no more nagging, please.

I'm glad to see progress on a new "City" book project. The glimpses in *The Spirit* show us a return to the authenticity that *A Contract With God* had. I'm glad he's choosing to use this technique again. His recent "verbal" 3-page view on the end of the world didn't work because of the lack of "authentic" illustration.

Ger Apeldoorn

T'Ven 17, Duivendrecht, Netherlands

DAREDEVIL ARTIST WRITES

Many thanks for *The Spirit* magazine. The reprinted adventures of Denny Colt instruct and entertain, as always--- and the "laboratory" pieces provide us the challenging, even revolutionary work of comics' most accomplished creator.

Mr. Eisner, you are my two favorite storytellers.

Frank Miller

Address withheld by request

CHECKLIST HELPERS

I think Cat is doing a masterful job on the Checklist, but here are a couple of additions:

Comix International No.5 (Warren): reprints "The Harvey Origin of The Spirit" (recolor, same as Warren *Spirit* No.10). Non-Spirit cover.

Plastic Man No.18 (IW/Super): cover is possibly by Joe Simon.

The Spirit No.12 (IW/Super): cover by Sol Brodsky.

Lou Mougin

826½ Plum Street, Graham, Texas 76046

Just a brief note to let you know what a great job you're doing with *The Spirit*. In your search for additional *Spirit* appearances, I can add the following to the "in-

cidental Art" section:

The Film Journal No.7 (Vol.2 No.4; 1975, published at Box 9602, Hollins College, VA 24020). It has a cover by Eisner (the June 5, 1949 *Spirit* splash page, plus new border art by Eisner, 1975). It also has one small interior illo on the contents page and one full-page reprint illo of the *Spirit* splash page for November 30, 1947. This is part of the lead article, "Something More Than Night," by John Baxter, a look at detective films of the 30s and 40s, with a note that Eisner's work captures the feel of the Hollywood film noir period. Hope this is of help to you. It may still be available as a back issue if you write the college. Keep up the fine work. How about a reprint of the "Ev'ry Little Bug" sheet music sometime? I'd love to see it.

Daniel Gobbett

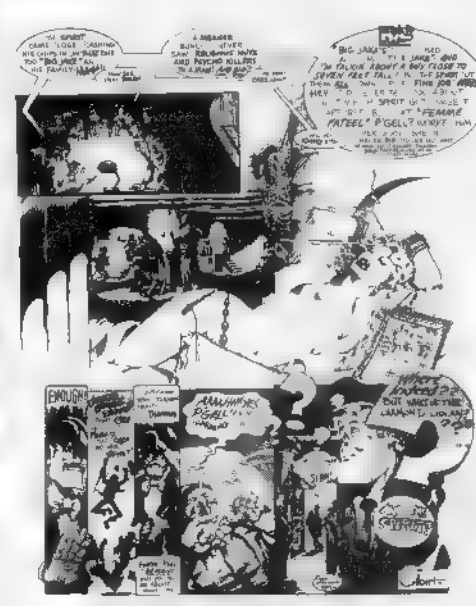
5704 64th Place, Riverdale, Maryland 20840

Thank you Lou and Daniel, for the addenda. The "Ev'ry Little Bug" sheet music, as well as the 1947 *Spirit* story, "Ev'ry Little Bug" (which contains a variant stanza to the song) will indeed be reprinted in due time.

WHEN NAZIS WERE JUST 'FOREIGN'

The Spirit No.28 had an overall feeling of unity missing from some of the previous issues. The text features were most worthwhile, particularly "The Unpublished *Spirit*."

As for the strips, apart from Denny Colt's Percival Pinkerton impersonation, "Sphinx and Satin" was interesting from an historical viewpoint. At first, Eisner's reticence about the origin of the "foreign agents" and his ersatz German puzzled me. But then I took a closer look at the date and realized that the story predated Pearl Harbor. Modern war comics feature so many characters who "knew from the first day he seized power that there was something wrong wit' the little mad house-painter from Austria" that it becomes rather jarring to see such caution in an act-



The correct sequence of Michael T. Gilbert's three pages from the *Spirit* Jam in issue No.30. See page 1 for more details.

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SP-31

ual wartime comic.

I presume that since *The Spirit* was sold as part of a newspaper, Eisner was under pressure not to offend the more politically suspect portion of the readership, though since those very papers must have been reporting news of the War since 1939, it hardly seems credible that *Spirit* fans wouldn't have guessed who the "foreign agents" represented. I'm surprised you didn't make some comment on this in "The Dept. of Loose Ends."

Nevertheless, the other strips were just as enjoyable, particularly "Deadline," the dramatic, visually memorable "Survivor," and even "Professor Pinx," though the two crooks were so amiable that it seemed rather a shame when *The Spirit* came in at the end to collar them.

Graeme Bessett

15 Litchfield Court, Colin Avenue, Grimsby
Humberside, England

Cat Yarnwode replies: The *Spirit* was not alone in treading cautiously with pre-War politics. Milton Caniff's *Terry & the Pirates*, set in China, never alluded to the Japanese Army, and *Uncle Sam* was careful not to offend the conflict. That Will Eisner knew war was not a table is evident when one reads the Uncle Sam story he wrote (and Lou Fine drew) for Quality's November 1941 issue of *National Comics*. That one actually features the bombing of Pearl Harbor—written and drawn MONTHS before it happened! Eisner credits an obscure book by Homer Lea, entitled "The Valour of Ignorance" with giving him the foresight to pull off that feat of seeming ESP. Lea's book, based on sound military principles, predicted the Japanese-American clash in the Pacific years before it came to pass.

ORIGINAL DRAWING WINNER

Thanks for sending the original Eisner drawing which I won in your contest. Keep up the good work with those *Spirit* magazines. I have them all! Enclosed is a photo of myself with the original and the cover it became

Thomas A. McCullough

10 Belanges Road, Waterford, NY 12188



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Merry Christmas!!





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